This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

ANDOVER-HARVARD LIBRARY
AH 4R8H /

943
Bap.741
N558f
G776tr
1858

ANDOVER-HARVARD
THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY

Baptist

W. Bake

Trials and Sufferings

FOR

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN NEW ENGLAND.

THE OLDEST BAPTIST CHURCH IN AMERICA NOT

THE

PROVIDENCE CHURCH.

J. R. GRAVES, EDITOR.

NASHVILLE:
SOUTH-WESTERN PUBLISHING HOUSE,
GRAVES, MARKS & CO.
1858.

THE FIRST BAPTIST BLOOD SHED IN AMERICA FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

1943
Bap. 741
N558f
G776tr
1858

INTRODUCTION TO THE NARRATIVE.

CHAPTER I.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE PRESENT CHURCH OF ENGLAND LAID IN PERSECUTION AND THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS.

"And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and was, and shall be, because thou hast judged thus; for they have shed the blood of Saints and Prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."—Rev. xvi. 5, 6.

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast, should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."—Rev. xiii. 11, 12, 15, 16, 17.

WAS the Church of Christ—the virgin bride of the Lamb—ever drunken with the blood of the saints? were her white robes ever dyed scarlet in the blood of martyrs, and herself prostituted by an unhallowed connection with kings, princes or with States? Was she ever for a year or a

day leagued with the state to force the consciences of Christian men, by the sword or the stake, the prison, or starvation and banishment? Can that be considered a Church of Christ of which a king and parliament, or an assembly or conference, is its head and supreme ruler and dictator?

These are questions which it becomes all men, and especially all Christian men to decide, least they be found at last arrayed under human leaders, in opposition to the authority of Christ, and for the subversion of his teachings and his Churches.

The Act of Uniformity fell with crushing weight upon all those denominations which did not teach or believe according to the Church of England, then dominant under the headship of Charles II., an Episcopalian by profession, but a Papist at heart.

The King, instigated by his Bishops and Parliament, was determined at all hazards to force all the subjects of his realm into uniformity in faith, and into union with, and support of, the Episcopal Church, thereby to strengthen his

throne,—there being no stronger ally or supporter of monarchy, than episcopacy, in any land.

That Act of Uniformity was entitled :

"An Act for the Uniformity of Public Prayers, and administration of Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies, and for establishing the Forms of making, ordaining, and consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons in the Church of England."

The following is the oath required :

"I, A. B., do declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by the book entitled 'The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the Use of the Church of England, together with the Psalter or Psalms of David, pointed as they are to be sung or said in Churches ;' and the form and manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating of bishops, priests, and deacons."

"The penalty for neglecting or refusing to make this declaration is deprivation, *ipso facto*, of all his spiritual promotions."

To give my reader a better understanding of it, I quote a few of its enactments :

"It is farther enacted, that no person shall be capable of any benefice, or presume to consecrate and administer the holy sacrament of the Lord's

Supper, before he be ordained a priest by Episcopal ordination, on pain of forfeiting for every offence one hundred pounds.

"No form or order of common prayer shall be used in any church, chapel, or other place of public worship, or in either of the universities, than is here prescribed and appointed.

"None shall be received as lecturers, or be permitted to preach, or read any sermon or lecture in any church or chapel, unless he be approved and licensed by the archbishop or bishop, and shall read the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, with a declaration of his unfeigned assent and consent to the same; and unless, the first time he preaches any lecture or sermon, he shall openly read the Common Prayer, and declare his assent to it; and shall, on the first lecture day of every month afterward, before lecture or sermon, read the Common Prayer and service, under pain of being disabled to preach; and if he preach while so disabled, to suffer three months' imprisonment for every offence.

"The several laws and statues formerly made for uniformity of prayer, &c., shall be in force for confirming the present Book of Common Prayer, and shall be applied for punishing all offences contrary to said laws, with relation to the said book, and no other.

"A true printed copy of the said book is to be provided in every parish Church, chapel, college, and hall, at the cost and charge of the parishioners or society, before the feast of St. Bartholomew, on pain of forfeiting three pounds a

month for so long as they shall be unprovided of it."

This bill was passed by the Parliament and received the royal signature the 19th May, 1661, and went into operation August 24th, following.

Though many dissenting ministers compromised their principles for the preservation of their lives and the sustenence of their families, still about two thousand refused to bow the knee to this image of the Apocalyptic Beast, and upon the 24th of August, that fatal St. Bartholomew day, were cast forth, homeless and houseless, pursued by the bribed informers and base minions of the head of the Church, with *fines and imprisonments.* Says Neal:

"Sad were the calamities of far the greater part of these unhappy sufferers, who, with their families, must have perished, if private collections in London, and divers places in the country, had not been made for their subsistence. Bishop Burnet says, they cast themselves on the providence of God and the charity of friends. The reverend and pious Mr. Thomas Gouge, late of St. Sepulchre's, was their advocate, who, with two or three of his brethren, made frequent application to several worthy citizens, of whom they received considerable sums of money for some years, till that charity was diverted into another channel; but, nevertheless, "many hundreds of

them," according to Mr. Baxter, "with their wives and children, had neither house nor bread; the people they left were not able to relieve them, nor durst they if they had been able, because it would have been called a maintenance of schism or faction. Many of the ministers, being afraid to lay down their ministry after they had been ordained to it, preached to such as would hear them, in fields and private houses, till they were apprehended and cast into jails, where many of them perished. The people were no less divided: some conformed, and others were driven to a greater distance from the Church, and resolved to abide by their faithful pastors at all events; they murmured at the government, and called the bishops and conforming clergy cruel persecutors; for which, and for their frequenting the private assemblies of their ministers, they were fined and imprisoned, till many families left their native country, and settled in the plantations.

"The Presbyterian ministers, though men of gravity and far advanced in years, were rallied in the pulpits under the opprobrious names of Schismatics and Fanatics; they were exposed in the playhouse and insulted by the mob, insomuch that they were obliged to lay aside their habits and walk in disguise. 'Such magistrates were put into commission as executed the penal laws with severity. Informers were encouraged and rewarded. It is impossible,' says the Conformist Plea for the Nonconformist, 'to relate the number of the sufferings both of ministers and

people; the great trials, with hardships upon their persons, estates, and families, by uncomfortable separations, dispersions, unsettlements, and removes; disgraces, reproaches, imprisonments, chargeable journeys, expenses in law, tedious sicknesses, and incurable diseases ending in death; great disquietments and frights to the wives and families, and their doleful effects upon them. Their congregations had enough to do, besides a small maintenance, to help them out of prisons, or maintain them there. Though they were as frugal as possible, they could hardly live: some lived on little more than brown bread and water; many had but £8 or £10 a year to maintain a family, so that a piece of flesh has not come to one of their tables in six weeks' time; their allowance could scarcely afford them bread and cheese. One went to plough six days and preached on the Lord's day. Another was forced to cut tobacco for a livelihood. The zealous justices of the peace knew the calamities upon some of the hearers, because of the poverty of the preachers. Out of respect to the worth and modesty of some of them,' says my author, 'I forbear their names.' Upon these foundations, and with these triumphs, was the present constitution of the Church of England restored. I shall make no farther remarks upon it, but leave it to the censure of the reader." *

But none suffered more severely than the English Baptists. The limits of this narrative will

* Neal, vol. ii. p. 246.

not allow the sad tale of their unpitied sufferings to be told.

With Neal, Baptists may well unite in saying, upon these foundations, of blood and murder, was the constitution of the present Episcopal Church builded! Can Episcopalians expect that Baptists will ever entertain fellowship for this organization, while its history is so well known, and the bitter memory of those days remain?

We ask again here, with renewed emphasis

WAS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST EVER A PERSECUTING CHURCH?

WAS IT EVER DRUNKEN WITH THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS?

With these remarks, introductory, the following Narrative of sufferings and triumphs, amid which the first Baptist Church and Churches in this Republic were founded, will be better understood.

Trials and Sufferings

FOR

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN NEW ENGLAND

CHAPTER II.

A TOUCHING NARRATIVE—THE NEW WORLD SOUGHT FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY—AN INQUIRER ON BOARD.

IT was soon after the passing of the Act of Uniformity, when more than two thousand ministers were, on refusing to conform to its requirements, deprived of their livings, and prohibited the exercise of their ministerial functions; many of them were subjected to fines and confiscations which swept away all property; others were beaten, thrown into prison, and treated with the greatest inhumanity, which, in some instances, resulted in their death—that the interesting and

affecting incidents occurred of which the following is substantially an authentic narrative, based as it is upon veritable records and standard authorities.

Mr. Williamson, who was concerned in a number of vessels which trafficked to different parts of the world, made a proposal to his son Stephen, a youth of considerable promise, that he should go out as supercargo, in the Reindeer, on her going back to America. For reasons which will hereafter appear, no proposition could have been more agreeable to him.

Although Mr. Williamson disliked the Puritans, and approved the stringent measures which were adopted to suppress them, or to compel them to conform, yet he was not unwilling to aid their escape from the country, even against law, provided he got well paid for his assistance.

"Puritan pounds," said he, "are current, though Puritan piety is at a discount; the rogues will get to America some way, and I may as well reap the benefit of their emigration as others. Besides, as long as I shall be helping to put them out of the way, why should the government complain? By removing the cause, I shall be assisting to allay the agitation of the public."

How gracefully a man can dupe himself by false reasoning, when it favors his own interest! So long as Mr. Williamson's false logic reasoned money into his pocket, it easily satisfied his judgment and his conscience. He could enter into secret negotiations with the Puritans to

furnish them a passage to America, provided they would compensate him handsomely for the risk he incurred of detection and punishment by the government. On terms highly favorable to himself, he had granted passages for a company of thirteen, amongst whom were two ministers. These, however, were not individuals who had separated themselves entirely from the established Church of England, but persons who, whilst they cherished an ardent affection for the doctrines and the ceremonies of that Church, whilst they loved its liturgy and reverenced its bishops, were yet strongly opposed to the innovations which had been introduced by Archbish Laud—men who, if novel, and what they deemed Popish rites and customs, had not been introduced into the ritual, and made obligatory upon all, would have lived and died in the bosom of the establishment. They loved the Church, but mourned over its corruptions.

From these passengers Stephen learned more of the character of Laud's administration than he knew before. He ascertained the practical working of his novel measures, and learned particularly why it was that they were so unwelcome to a large portion of the people. Whilst to some it seemed a small affair whether, according to the requirements of Laud, they bowed at the name of Christ, when it was uttered in the services by the clergyman, or not; whether they regarded the Lord's Supper as a real sacrifice, and the bread as the real body of Christ, or as only a commemorative ordinance, and the bread as a

mere symbol; whether the communion table was placed in the centre of the chancel, or at the east side of the chancel, and there made in the form of an altar, having two or three steps for its ascent, and enclosed with a railing—whilst some viewed all these as matters of indifference, yet others regarded them as highly important; made them subjects of conscience, and would not on any account yield to the enjoined innovation. Their refusal to conform to these requirements of the archbishop subjected them to all kinds of annoyances. Men who were sound in the belief of Christian doctrines, unexceptionable in their deportment, and laborious in the discharge of their pastoral duties, and who had occupied for many year the same field of labor, until they were surrounded by large congregations ardently attached to them, were, on account of their nonconformity in these non-essential particulars, fined, censured, and removed from their livings.

"I don't recognize the right of government to compel us to perform religious ceremonies contrary to the convictions of our own judgment and conscience," said the Rev. Mr. Blaisdell, when in conversation with others upon the quarter-deck.

"If it is right for government to obliged us to do some things against our conscience, it is right to oblige us to do many things; and then we might as well be destitute of conscience."

"Very true," replied Mr. Fairbanks. "Though it was a severe trial for me to tear myself away

from the spot where I have lived and labored for the last twenty years, yet I have chosen to do it rather than remain there with a polluted conscience. But it was a heavy affliction. There was the garden on which I had bestowed immense pains and labor. During all these years, I have diligently cultivated it. I filled it with the rarest flowers; I planted it with the choicest fruit; I grafted all the trees. Every tree has a history—something peculiar to itself. In that parsonage all my children were born. In the village cemetery are the remains of two of them —one on each side of their mother. With the inmates of every house I was acquainted, and by large numbers I know I was beloved. It was my flock. They had grown up around me, and I felt a shepherd's interest in them all." The good man wept as he called to recollection those whom he had left.

"Still, with all my attachment for the place and the pulpit, I could not conform and remain with them with a good conscience. With just enough to pay my passage to America, I have left all those objects of interest, to commit myself to the uncertainties of the future, in a new world. I go to enjoy religious liberty—where I shall be permitted to cherish my own religious opinions, without being subjected to the persecuting edicts of the powers that be."

"I never could see," said Stephen, "what right the government had to dictate to the people their religious creeds."

"There are many other things which the go-

vernment does, of which I presume you do not see the rightfulness."

"Very true; but this has always seemed to me to be so far beyond the proper authority of government, that I wonder the people submit to it."

"All the people do not submit. Our being on board this vessel to-day is the proof, and the consequence, that we will not submit. No man, whether priest, archbishop, or king, shall coerce my religious views."

"No man or men, neither kings nor kings ministers, conferences nor assemblies of ministers have a right to make laws for Christians," said Mr. Fairbanks, and raising himself to his full height, "I tell you, sir, Christ is the Christians only king."

"But are you certain that the colonial government in America will not interfere with your theological views?"

"How can they? They know the evil of it. Persecution has driven them from their own land. It would be the most palpable inconsistency for them to inflict upon others that from which they have fled themselves."

"So it seems to me," said Stephen. "They would be as bad as their persecutors, for they would be guilty of similar conduct."

The effect of the various conversations of Stephen with the passengers was, to awaken in his mind a deep sympathy in their behalf. Although he had been brought up under the influence of the established Church, of which his parents were members of the "straitest sect,"

who justified every measure of the government, he did not by any means partake of all their views. The laws which had been passed against the nonconformists in the Church, and the dissenters who had separated from it, appeared to him both unjust and cruel. He could not, therefore, refrain from rejoicing than an asylum was offered them in the new world, where they would be free from this spiritual tyranny. Each of the company had a personal history of sufferings, arising from the iniquitous policy which had been pursued by Laud. As Stephen became sufficiently acquainted to converse with the different passengers, his astonishment was daily increased by discovering the numerous ways in which the ecclesiastical laws of the kingdom were fatal to the happiness, not only of those who could not conscientiously comply with them, but to all such also as were in any wise dependent upon these—as wives, children, servants, or workmen. Consequently, his aversion to those laws was greatly increased.

Finding in him a sympathizing friend, the passengers disclosed to him fully the bitter experience through which they had passed, for not denying what they sincerely believed, or for refusing to perform what they considered was positively wrong. At times his eyes were filled with tears, and his blood boiled as he listened to their affecting and exciting narratives.

It was usual for the passengers to have daily devotions on board, and preaching, when the weather would permit. As these exercises re-

ceived their coloring from the peculiar circumstances in which the Puritans were placed, their tendency was to lessen in the mind of Stephen his prejudices and opposition towards their views, and to create a dislike towards the ritual of the Episcopal Church.

After a passage of moderate length, the Reindeer arrived at Boston. Stephen was now full of business. It was his place to see that all articles of merchandize taken on board, and of which he had kept the account, were delivered or accounted for. This being over, he looked around for a boarding-place, and after considerable trouble, nearly all the houses being filled by the new arrivals, he succeeded in obtaining accommodations.

A small attic chamber, only large enough to contain his trunk and bed, with a small table, and a single chair, were all the conveniences that could be afforded him. With these he managed to make himself quite comfortable.

CHAPTER III.

SUSPECTED HERETICS.

BY means of letters which he had brought with him from England, Stephen Williamson was soon introduced to the most prominent families of the colony. The character and social position of his father being well known, assisted in eliciting the interest of the people in his behalf. It was not long before he obtained a desirable situation in the store of Mr. Strongfaith Bates. This was a peculiar establishment. As a store, it furnished the colonists with such groceries, dry goods, and other articles for domestic purposes, as they were not supplied with from other sources. In addition to this, it was a place of exchange, or barter, where the productions of the English were exchanged for the furs, moccasons, game, and other articles brought into the settlement by the Indians. Being both the store and the "trucking house" of the colony, it was a place of public resort for the men—a kind of social exchange, where were picked up all the floating items of intelligence, and where all the topics of the times were freely discussed. It was a place of so much importance in the infant settlement, that the dignitaries in the Church and State did not think it unbecoming their position

to visit it, and, as occasion required, to take part in conversation. At different times, principles of law, government, and religion were there fully canvassed. This furnished Stephen with the opportunity of learning more of the Puritan character and spirit than he could have acquired in any other position in the town.

One day, when several of them, according to their usual practice, had assembled there, among whom were Endicott, Pynchon, and Dudley, three leading men in the colony, the conversation turned upon a subject that had occasioned considerable excitement amongst the people.

"I am somewhat suspicious," said Endicott, in a low confidential tone of voice, "that our brother of the mill is tainted with this pestilent heresy."

"Indeed! what makes you think so?" asked Pynchon.

"I noticed," continued Endicott, "that last Sabbath, when our pastor was baptizing the child of brother Aldersey, he held his head down, and refused to behold the edifying ordinance."

"We must keep our eye upon him, then, for the apostle, you know, commands us to 'mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.'"

"And a wise command it is, too, Dudley; for unless we deal with these errorists with a strong hand, their heresy will spread as doth a pestilence."

"True, true," said Pynchon; "the surest way

is to nip it in the bud—to crush the viper while it's young."

Stephen, who was at the desk, making an entry of some goods he had just sold, paused in his writing at hearing such language.

"I fear," said Endicott, "that we shall have more trouble with these errorists than some of us dream of. I learn that there are a number of them in different parts of the colony. We may rest assured that they will not keep quiet. Their past history, as well as that of the stiff-necked Familists, shows that they are not content with holding their opinions; but as a matter of religious duty, they are active in making proselytes. Their heresy is like the leprosy, very spreading and contagious. And if I could have my way, I would treat them as lepers were anciently treated—I would shut them up by themselves; or, if they ran loose, I would have their heads shaved, their lips covered, and oblige them, whenever any one approached them, to cry out, 'I am unclean, unclean.' They are like prolific weeds in the garden of the Lord. The sooner they are rooted up, the better will it be for Zion."

"I hope," said Pynchon, "that the great Head of the Church will give our godly ministers and magistrates the wisdom that cometh from above, and which is profitable to direct in every emergency."

The impression made on the mind of Stephen by this conversation was painful. It seemed to him as if he detected the spirit of Laud in the

remarks he had heard. If the principles which had been expressed were to be carried out, he thought they would lead to scenes similar to those which had been acted under the direction of the archbishop. He experienced special solicitude for the suspected heretic, although he knew not who it was.

"I think," said Dudley, addressing himself to Endicott, "that you had better inform the minister of your suspicions immediately, and let him, as the priest did under the Jewish law, examine the supposed leper, for you know that, under the law, if a man was suspected of having the leprosy, he was brought to the priest for examination, and if the hair of the flesh was turned white, and the plague in sight was deeper than the skin of his flesh, the priest declared it leprosy, and the man was treated as unclean.* In like manner our minister ought to have an interview with our mill brother, to see whether your suspicions are correct—whether the hair in the plague is turned white, and whether the sore is more than skin deep."

"Well," said Strongfaith, who had thus far been a silent, though, for special reasons, a deeply-interested listener, "suppose the sore proves to be not only skin deep, but heart and soul deep—what then?"

"What then!" echoed Endicott, with unusual warmth; "why, let our godly Cotton, who is a skilful physician in treating diseased souls, ad-

* Lev. xiii. 3.

minister a spiritual medicine. By the application of a strong theological plaster he may heal the sore."

"But suppose the application is unsuccessful; suppose the sore is irritated, and becomes inflamed by the treatment; what then?"

"What then?" repeated Endicott, with earnestness: "why, I would have him brought before the Church, and the magistrates, and treated as all heretics deserve."

A number of customers now entered the store, who interrupted the conversation, and the parties separated.

After they had left the store, as they were walking slowly through the street, Endicott, who was walking between the other two, said in a low, measured tone of voice, "Do you know whether Strongfaith Bates is well established in the truth?"

"I know nothing to the contrary," replied Pynchon. Dudley remained silent.

"I did not like," continued Endicott, "his questions, nor his manner of propounding them. Why is he so anxious to know how the mill brother would be treated if guilty of heresy, unless he have a little of the bad leaven himself?"

"True, true," said Dudley; "and why should he have indulged the supposition that the treatment of the minister would increase the difficulty, unless he was well convinced of the obstinacy of the case?"

"It would not be surprising if they had had private conferences upon the subject."

"And, as birds of a feather flock together, they probably smpathize with each other."

"We must endeavor to ascertain the facts," said Pynchon, "for the question has crossed my mind, more than once, Why do those who are known to be tainted with this heresy frequent Bates's store? I should think that he had the custom of them from all the different settlements, for I have seen suspicious persons there from Weymouth, Swansea, and Lynn; and now I remember what I had forgotten—that last week I took up his Bible in the store, and upon opening it, found that the leaves were turned to several passages referring to the disputed subject."

"Indeed!" replied Endicott, "evidence thickens. We must be on our guard, or we shall find these errorists will increase like the locusts of Egypt."

"Yes, and like them they will destroy every green thing in the garden of the Lord," added Dudley. "The evil must be prevented, and if it can be brought about in no other way, we must use an iron rod, as we did in the case of the heretical and blasphemons Gorton, and his adherents." This was said with emphasis.

The parties now reached a corner of the street, or more properly road, where they separated; each going in a different direction homeward.

CHAPTER IV.

A NAME EXPLAINED.

AFTER the customers had been waited upon, and all had left the store, Stephen asked his employer what heresy was alluded to, in the conversation he had just heard.

"They call it Anabaptism, and those who hold to it Anabaptists; but that, I think, is a term of reproach."

"Anabaptists?" said Stephen, musingly; "and who are they?"

Anciently they were those Churches that rejected the authority of the Church of Rome, which they regarded as a corrupt body—known in Scripture as "The Man of Sin, Mystical Babylon—the Mother of Harlots," &c. They regarded all ordinances administered in the Romish Church to be null and void, and refused to recognize them as valid—since to receive her acts as scriptural would be to acknowledge the organization as scriptural, and hence all who came to them out of the Romish Church they baptized, and were on this account charged with the sin of Ana-baptism, (baptizing the second time,) but they maintain that an invalid baptism is *no baptism*, and therefore they only *baptize*.

After the Reformers had come out of Rome, and established societies, (for Churches we cannot call them, since they originated from men's wisdom and authority,) in which sprinkling was generally substituted for the only scriptural and primitive act Those' Churches which were not corrupted by Luther and Calvin from their primitive scriptural purity, still baptized those converts they received from the societies of the Reformers, since they looked upon them as the children of the Romish Church, who was the Mother of Harlots, since they came out of her, and received all their authority and ordinances from her ; and therefore are, and can be no more true Churches than the Church of Rome is.* These Churches were by the Reformers called Anabaptists. They also repudiated the baptism of the Church of England, because they regarded it a false Church, and its ministers anti-Christian ministers, for it was evidently a daughter of Rome, and its hands and those of its ministers were bathed in the blood of the saints.† But these Anabaptists most strenuously maintained. That the doctrine of infant baptism is not taught in the Scriptures—that none only but those who have repented of sin, and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, ought to be baptized, and that the ordinance can be properly administered only by immersion."

"But why do they call them Anabaptists?"

---

* See Bulinger, Hist. Anabap.
† See Crosby, vol. i. p. 273.

inquired Stephen, with a strong accent upon the first syllable of the word.

"As explained by our minister, in a sermon which he preached against this people a few Sabbaths ago, the word *Anabaptism* means rebaptism, or baptism again; and it is given to them because they baptize or immerse those who have received the ordinance in their infancy, as well as to adults that have been immersed in those corrupt human societies.."

"That is," continued Stephen, "if a person who has been sprinkled in infancy is afterwards convinced that that was not baptism, and then upon his own profession of repentance and faith, is baptized by immersion, him they call an Anabaptist."

"Yes, precisely."

"Do you know any of these people?" asked Stephen.

Mr. Bates paused. He knew that these people were objects of dislike and hatred to the Puritans, and would probably be proceeded against ecclesiastically and legally, by the Church and the government, and he did not wish to be known as one of their confidential acquaintances, lest that fact should become public, and he be called upon to testify against them, and perhaps be officially censured himself. Although he knew that Stephen was not a member of any Church, yet he was ignorant of his views upon the question at issue between that people and the standing order; he therefore carelessly remarked, in reply to his inquiry,—

"Some of them come in here occasionally."

"Are they timid about expressing their sentiments."

"Not all. I have heard them argue here with some of our Church, by the hour together."

"What is their character?"

"They are honest, upright men; firm believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ; conscientious; fearless, but perhaps a little too forward in making known their dissent from the doctrine of infant baptism."

"Are they in danger of persecution?"

"Why, as to that, you heard what was said here a few moments ago, by those three brethren, from which you may draw an inference."

"My inference, then, is," replied Stephen, instantly, "that if those three persons expressed the real spirit of the leading men of the colony, these Anabaptists will soon find themselves in hot water. I thought I could detect in their manner and tones of voice the same persecuting hate which I frequently saw the Episcopalians in my father's house exhibit towards the nonconformists. O, how much cruelty was inflicted upon them because they would not, and could not with a good conscience, comply with the despotic laws of the kingdom concerning religious matters."

"I know all about it," replied Mr. Strongfaith Bates, "for I passed through the ordeal with my brethren, and to escape it we came to this uncivilized wilderness; settled down amid savage beasts, and more savage men, that here we

might enjoy our religious opinions unmolested by government."

"And yet," said Stephen, "you are about to pursue the same course against these unoffending Baptists that you so strongly condemn when directed against yourselves. Is this consistent?"

A slight smile lighted up the countenance of Strongfaith. He was pleased with the tenor and spirit of Stephen's remark and question, and to draw him into a more full commitment of himself, he replied,—

"What do you think of it?"

"I think of it?" said he, with considerable animation; "I will tell you;" and then, speaking more deliberately, but with no less emphasis than before, he added, "If the Puritans persecute these people because of their difference of religious principle and practice, they ought for ever to keep silent respecting the cruelties themselves received from the established Church at home. Their own course will justify the persecuting measures of Archbishop Laud. They will develope a similar spirit, and be in like manner guilty of injustice and cruelty."

"Then you would have no sympathy with a Church or government which should attempt to crush what they believed to be religious errors, by severe penal enactments?"

"No. I go for freedom of thought."

Mr. Bates was now relieved. He knew not but that Stephen was in symyathy with the rulers, and might become an informer, and in

that case he was aware that in the course of time he would be able to make disclosures of a most important nature, as his store was the only common resort of these suspected citizens, who there expressed themselves freely. He therefore resolved to make a confident of his clerk in religious as well as in commercial affairs, and let him know exactly how he stood. Stephen would then perceive, he thought, the best course to pursue, when any of the Church or the civil officers were in the store. It would make him more attentive to what was uttered by others, and more prudent in what he said himself. He accordingly replied,—

"There are a considerable number amongst us who go for the same thing; individuals who are very free, not only to think for themselves, but also to give utterance to their thoughts. It is proper that you should know, Stephen, that these Baptists are scattered around in the different settlements, and almost all of them are my customers. They come here from Rehoboth, Swansea, and Lynn, and as I always express a tolerant spirit towards them, and manifest an interest in their welfare, they have made quite confidant of me. Indeed, I have heard them argue so frequently upon the points at issue between them and us, that I am not so sure they are wrong. Still, I am not prepared to yield the ground. To own the truth, Stephen, I am examing the whole subject for myself. This I have never done before. My parents believed in the validity of infant baptism, and had it administered to all their

children. The ministers under whose instructions I have always sat repeatedly preached upon its importance. I have, therefore, taken it for granted, as correct. And this, I presume, is the case with many others. They believe in it as a scriptural ordinance, because their parents and pastors have so taught them. *They have never examined the subject for themselves.* I have heard so much upon this topic recently, that my faith in infant sprinkling is a little shaken, and I am determined to settle the matter by as thorough an examination of the whole ground as I am capable of giving it."

CHAPTER V.

A CLOUD GATHERING—A STORM THREATENING.

THE trio of stern Puritans, who, a few days before, had, in Mr. Bates's store, expressed their fears respecting the spread of the Baptists, were, by a kind of peculiar sympathy, frequently drawn together. At the close of service one lecture day, after Parson Cotton had preached a long and forcible sermon against the spread of heresy, they were attracted to each other, and away from the meeting-house together.

"Our godly minister was graciously helped of

the Spirit to-day," said Endicott, commencing the conversation.

"Yes, he spake the truth with great boldness and power," replied Dudley.

"I could not help thinking," said Pynchon, "when he was pouring out his burning anathemas upon heretics with so much edifying earnestness and eloquence—I could not help thinking of the description of the Son of man which is given us in the first chapter of the Revelation, and especially of that part which informeth us that out of his mouth goeth a sharp, two-edged sword; for verily the word of our parson to-day was quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword upon all errorists and schismatics."

"Did you notice the effect upon our brother of the mill?"

"No; he sits not within my view in the sanctuary; but I suppose he hang his head like a guilty criminal hearing his sentence pronounced."

"Far from it. His head was erect, and he continued looking with the greatest boldness ——"

"Impudence, I should say," interrupted one of the others—

"Into the minister's face, till he closed the sermon. No one would have suspected, from his appearance, that any thing said from the pulpit was in the least degree applicable to him."

"That's always the policy of heresy. Its companions are hypocrisy and effrontery."

"Let that be as it may," replied Dudley, "I

have no doubt this heresy is spreading. Information has reached me that some whom we little imagine are becoming tainted with it. The obligation is becoming more and more imperative for us to arrest it by wholesome laws; and unless we erect a high and strong barrier, by stringent enactments, it will overflow the country like the waters of a deluge."

"'Tis even so. The arm of the civil power must be extended for the protection of the interests of the Church. Unless this theological miasma be arrested, it will poison our whole community, and defeat the object of our settlement in in this waste howling wilderness."

"You are correct. With immense labor, expense, and self-sacrifice, we have crossed, at the hazard of our lives, the wide waste of three thousand miles of water, to establish a colony in the midst of uncleared forests and untamed savages, that we and our children might escape not only the sword of persecution, but, what is worse, the contaminating influence of pestilent heresies. Self-preservation and obligation to our families require us to deal with these errorists. If Baptists, Familists, and other errorists be tolerated in the midst of us, and allowed to diffuse their pernicious doctrines, it will not be long before 'Ichabod' will be written upon the fairest portions of Zion, for her glory will have departed."

"You think, then," said Pynchon, "we must suppress it by law?"

"There is no other way," replied Dudley.

"If we resort to the wholesome discipline of fines, whippings, prisons, and banishments, we may purify ourselves from this contagion; but otherwise it will spread as doth a canker. To connive at it will be like conniving at the weeds in one's garden. All they desire from the law is to be let alone; but to let them alone is to let them grow. Let a plague, a pestilence, a conflagration alone ——"

"Our danger is the more imminent," interrupted Endicott, "from certain great names among us who greatly encourage them."

"True; it is one of the mysteries of Providence that so good, and learned, and able a man as Dunster should have been seduced into any of these errors. If he had not allowed himself to be blinded in this matter, he might have continued at the head of the college, and made himself a bright and a burning light for years to come."

"Verily thou speakest wisely; but his denial of the sacred ordinance of baptism showed, as the apostle saith, that 'Satan had gotten the advantage of him.' The plague-spot was upon him, and it was unsafe to retain him in a position of so much influence. He might have infected the whole school."

"Strange that the first president of Harvard College should have been tainted with this heresy."

"And not only the first, but the second also; for you recollect that Chauncy has no faith in sprinkling, whether of the old or the young,

but insists that dipping, or the immersion of the the whole body in water, is essential to the ordinance. How absurd!"

"Absurd or not, as these are known to be learned men,—persons of note and standing among us,—they will have great influence in giving currency to these dangerous heresies, and beguiling unstable souls."

"They have done so already. Their preaching and their private conversation have already led some astray. As for Dunster, prudent counsels have no effect upon him. He might have retained his office as president of the college, if he had only promised to *remain silent* upon his favorite error. This he refused. He preferred to relinquish that honorable and useful position, rather than remain quiet upon that obnoxious and mischief-making dogma. If he could control matters, never again would an infant be allowed to receive the sacred seal of the covenant."

"If he had lived in the days of Moses," added Dudley, "I suppose he would have denied the rite of circumcision to children, though it would have secured his exclusion from the tribes of Israel. Chauncy has shown more wisdom. Though he insists that immersion only is valid baptism, and has administered it in that mode to both young and old, yet he was willing to comply with the conditions of his office, which require him to abstain from disseminating his sentiments on that subject. He consented to close his lips on doctrine, that he might have the opportunity of opening them for bread."

"Not entirely so, I trust. He doubtless regards his present position as head of the college eminently favorable for usefulness. He is, therefore, willing to be silent on one point, which he knows the ministry and the government regard as erroneous, that he may have the privilege of teaching the youth of the Church, branches in which we are all agreed."

"And there is Lady Moody, too, who, is at Lynn. We must endeavor, if possible, to save her. She is an amiable, discreet, religious woman; highly thought of by those who know her. But her conscience is inveigled into an approbation of the spreading heresy to so great a degree, that, like Dunster, she rejects infant baptism entirely. She is doing much injury to the Lord's heritage there; but if she could be reclaimed, and all this bad leaven eradicated from her, she might become a useful mother in Israel."

Dudley, with a long sigh, expressed the fear that was hopeless. Error and fanaticism were nearly inseparable in his view, and the latter always increased the strength of the former. To him reclamation appeared well-nigh hopeless. Prevention of its further spreading was, he thought, the true policy. "Let those who are already marked with the leprous spot," said he "go; but let us labor to prevent the plague from spreading. We must make examples of some of them to deter others."

Their conversation continued in this strain until they reached Mr. Bates's store, which they all three entered.

"Well," said Endicott, addressing Mr. Bates, "how does our brother of the mill feel, since he met with that signal rebuke of Divine Providence?"

"Rebuke?" replied Strongfaith, not perceiving the bearing of the question. "I did not know that he had received any."

"Perhaps," said Dudley, who fully comprehended the drift of the inquiry, "Brother Bates does not regard it as a rebuke."

"You are too deep for me," said Bates.

"As the water was for his drowning boy, who had fallen into the mill-stream," immediately rejoined Dudley. Bates now understood them fully.

"I apprehend," said he, "that he does not view that event in the same light that you do."

"I see not," replied Dudley, "in what other light he can regard it than a solemn admonition of him for his dangerous error. He insists upon it there must be a burial in water to render baptism valid; and has not his boy been buried in water nigh unto death? Is it not an intimation that this tampering with sacred ordinances involves great peril?"

"Ay," said Pynchon, "even as the touching of the tottering ark of the covenant was a terrible offence in Uzzah, and brought down the judgment of Heaven upon his guilty head. We live under a milder administration, and hence our reproofs are the more tender."

Stephen now for the first time learned that

the brother of the mill was Eaton, and that he was tainted with baptistical heresies. He listened, therefore, to the conversation with deep attention. He learned from it that from the first there had been some in the colony who rejected the popular docrine of infant baptism, and some who denied the validity of sprinkling. But as they were members of the Church, attended to all the usages of the Puritans, and were not forward to thrust their opinions upon others, they had not been disturbed. But now the subject was receiving greater attention than ever. The deep and wide-spread agitation which had been occasioned by the sentiments and conduct of Roger Williams, together with the severe treatment which he and others received, had been the means of directing the minds of men to the subject. They read whatever books upon this important topic they could find; they searched the Scriptures; they conversed freely upon it, so that there were many occasions of debate between those who cherished opposite sentiments upon this exciting theme. The result was, that a number were convinced of the truthfulness of Baptist sentiments. They refused to bring their children to the Church to have them christened; or if they did, it was with great reluctance. Others were desirous that the ordinance should be administered to young and old by immersion; they did not believe that any other mode was valid; whilst a third class maintained not only the necessity of immersion, but insisted further, that the only proper subjects of baptism, were

those who had repented of sin and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This conversation opened to Stephen new topics of thought and inquiry, and he resolved to imitate the example of his employer, and make the question of Christian baptism a subject of special investigation.

From this time these two inquirers after truth had long and frequent conversations upon this topic. All the passages of Scripture referring to it were examined and re-examined, many times. The arguments of the opposite parties they discussed, and all the light which they could obtain they cheerfully received. Whatever books upon either side of the question they could find, they eagerly read. To their examination they added conscientious and earnest prayer.

CHAPTER VI.

CHURCH AND STATE.

DURING this process of investigation, a circumstance occurred which would have deterred some minds from prosecuting the subject.

A Mrs. Painter, being a member of the Church, naturally felt solicitous that her infant should receive the ordinance of baptism. She suggested the subject to her husband; but Mr. Painter

being one of Bates's customers, had for some time been in the habit of conversing with Strongfaith and Stephen upon the baptismal question, and had become fully convinced of the impropriety of administering the ordinance to infants. Being a conscientious man, he was unwilling that his practice should be in violation of his principles. His wife differed with him upon this subject. It was her desire that their infant child should be carried to the Church, and according to the customs of the Puritans, their receive the ordinance. Painter would not consent. He strongly insisted upon it that infant baptism was not a Divine ordinance, but an invention of men, and instead of being beneficial, or even harmless, was positively injurious. Frequent, and sometimes warm, were the domestic discussions between the two upon this subject. The wife was unwilling to disobey her husband, and the husband was equally unwilling to sanction by his own example what he believed was a religious error. Parson Cotton was kept informed of all the births that occurred in the town. And being a vigilant and faithful shepherd, he kept his eye upon all these tender lambs, to see that they were solemnly dedicated to God in baptism. He knew all the little ones in town who had received the seal of the covenant, and all who had not. The parents of these latter he did not fail to visit, and remind them of their duty to their offspring. Having noticed that Painter had delayed to bring his last child to the Church for the ordinance, he made the family a pastoral

call to ascertain the reason. He was not long in discovering that it was owing to the influence of the dreadful plague of heresy which was troubling the colony.

Painter frankly acknowledged that he had no confidence in the ordinance of infant baptism, and did not believe that it was sustained by any scriptural evidence. This led the good pastor to enter into an argument with him upon the subject. He went over the whole ground, dwelling particularly upon the Abrahamic covenant, and urged every conceivable motive to induce Painter to bring out his child to the ordinance. He was unsuccessful in producing any change in his opinions, or of obtaining from him a promise that his child should be presented for the rite. Painter defended his own views with considerable adroitness and force. He insisted upon it that there was no command in the Scriptures enjoining it as a duty, and therefore he would not have his child baptized. The faithful pastor reminded him that if he persisted in his heresy, the consequences would be painful, and he had better pause, and not proceed further in a course which he would find was strewed with thorns.

"I will walk," replied Painter, "in the way which I believe is right, though I find it paved with coals of fire."

"Be not presumptuous, brother; remember you are arraying yourself against both the Church and the civil power. To endure the keen edge of the sword of state, and the dreadful

anathemas of Zion, you will find to be no easy service."

To this threat, which Painter knew was based upon truth, he firmly replied,—

"My trust is in God. I believe that his grace will be sufficient for me."

After a few words of sympathy and consolation to the mother, and an exhortation to her to remain firm in the truth, the parson patted the cheeks of the little infant sitting in its mother's lap, and took his departure.

A recollection of the sermon which he had preached a short time before, in which he had, with great cogency of reasoning and energy of manner, urged the importance of vigilance to detect the germs of heresy, and destroy them before they had time to grow, strengthened his determination to bring this case before the Church at Boston, and have it settled, so that all others, who were in danger of being affected by the same error, might know what to expect, in case they caught the contagion.

At the next meeting of the Church, the defection of Brother Painter was presented. The matter was solemnly considered. Some were in favor of immediate exclusion; others urged forbearance, and the desirableness of making efforts to persuade him to abandon his foolish and dangerous error. These latter counsels prevailed, and the pastor and two of the elder brethren were appointed to labor with him, and endeavor to convince him of the truth, and keep him in the bosom of the Church.

These Church officials were faithful to their duty. They visited Painter, sometimes together, at other times alone, and had with him long conversations. But they made not the slightest impression on his mind. Neither could they persuade him to say that his child might be baptized, provided that would insure him against ecclesiastical censure.

"No, rather than consent to what I believe to be an unscriptural and injurious practice, I will suffer any censures the Church can pass upon me. I have nothing to fear if I do what I think is right, but every thing if I do what I believe is wrong."

Finding it impossible to convince him of his error, or even persuade him to consent to the sprinkling of his child, his case was brought before the Church for final action, and he was formally excommunicated for heresy, and for a contempt of the ordinance of God.

This act not only excluded him from the privileges of the Church—it also disfranchised him. For it was a law of Massachusetts at that time, that none but members of the Church should be entitled to the rights and immunities of freemen. Consequently, Painter could no longer take part in the affairs of the colony, nor even vote for officers.

His case, however, was not allowed to rest here. This refusal of a poor man to have his child sprinkled was deemed a subject of too great magnitude to escape the vigilance "of the powers that be." Civil government was invoked

to protect the interests of the Church; and poor Painter was brought by a legal warrant before the court to answer for the great misdemeanor of refusing to perform a religious ceremony which his conscience and judgment both taught him was wrong. It was nowise difficult to find sufficient evidence to convict him. After the facts were all known, the court, with formal dignity, interposed its authority, and ordered Painter to have his child baptized. He, however, was no more disposed to obey this order of court, and conform to Puritan usage, than his judges were to obey the "orders of council," which required conformity to the Church of England. In his defence, he maintained that the sprinkling of infants was an unchristian ordinance, and consequently carried with it no obligation whatever. He was conscientiously opposed to it, and he would not violate his conscience to please any court or escape any penalty on earth. The august tribunal before whom he was brought, deemed this a matter of such great magnitude as to require the infliction of a healthful punishment, lest their leniency might encourage others, and thus increase the heresy; they therefore passed sentence that he should be publicly whipped.

At the appointed time, this theological criminal was taken to the public whipping-post, there bound, and in the presence of a multitude *cruelly whipped, because he refused to have his infant sprinkled!*

He endured the brutal infliction with great

fortitude, and at the close, though faint and trembling from the effects, he thanked God for the grace and strength by which he had been sustained under the painful ordeal.

CHAPTER VII.

EFFECTS OF PERSECUTION.

THE public whipping of Mr. Painter created no small stir in the colony. There were those who fully approved the deed, and who considered it a truly politic, as well as just procedure. Others, though they regarded Painter as in great error, and justified his exclusion from the Church, yet judged his punishment at the whipping-post to be both cruel and unwise; a third class, who differed from "the standing order" on various points, considered the measure as a piece of tyrannical persecution, and had their sympathies deeply enlisted on behalf of the sufferer; whilst a fourth class, embracing those who were inclined to Baptist sentiments, instead of having their heretical tendencies corrected by this exhibition of ecclesiastical cruelty, were more firmly resolved than ever to adhere to what they believed was right. Intelligence of this punishment was soon circulated throughout the colonies, showing to all what they must expect, in

case they differed in opinion or practice from the Congregational standard.

The effect of this upon Stephen and his employer was, to make them more open and bold in the expression of any opinions they cherished which were not in harmony with the standing order. Especially were they more free to converse upon the subject of baptism. Many and long were the arguments which they had with different individuals upon this exciting theme—some of whom strenuously opposed them, while others were greatly moved by their arguments. Neither Mr. Bates nor Stephen was at this time fully converted to the sentiments of the Baptists. They were merely inquirers upon the subject, though it must be confessed that the further they examined it, the more did they lean to the side of the heresy. The more they became acquainted with the arguments of the Baptists, and with their method of interpreting Scripture, the deeper became the impression upon their minds that this persecuted people were on the side of truth.

There was one point, however, on which Mr. Bates could not obtain satisfactory information. Although he was a man of strong mind, a clear thinker, and sound reasoner, yet he had not been favored with a liberal education, and was ignorant of the ancient languages. It seemed to him that a knowledge of the meaning of the original Greek word, which, in the English version of the Bible was rendered "baptize," was of great importance.

"If I only knew," said he to Stephen, in one of the frequent conversations he was accustomed to have with his clerk, "how the Greeks, in the days of the Saviour, understood the word which is translated 'baptize,' it would afford me not only relief, but great assistance."

"You know what the Baptists themselves say upon the subject!"

"Yes; but many of them are no more learned than myself, and what they assert they have received second-handed, and therefore cannot vouch for its accuracy. What I want is, for some one well acquainted with the ancient languages, to tell me the meaning of the original word 'baptize.'"

"Why not ask the president of Harvard College?" said Stephen.

"True; I did not think of that. President Chauncy is admitted by all to be a very learned man, and is as competent to give information upon this subject, as any man in the new, or the old world."

The next day a small boat, with two men, was seen crossing Charles River, from Boston to Cambridge. At that time the appearance of the river and the country was widely different from that which now greets the eye. Instead of the numerous bridges which now span the stream for the accommodation of cars, carriages, and foot passengers, it was all open. Not a bridge had been erected, not a pile for the purpose driven. Instead of large cities and towns presenting themselves in every direction, the banks of the

river, and the islands of the harbor, with the shores of the bay, were covered with green. Dense forests, beautifully rolling hills, or fertile plains, variegated with a few small villages, with here and there a cluster of Indian wigwams, completed the picture. Now and then an Indian might be seen paddling his light bark canoe across the water, or pausing in the middle of the stream, engaged in fishing.

When the boat reached the shore of Cambridge, at a point not far from the present termination of Harvard street, one of the men left it, and walked towards the college; the other, who was the owner of the craft, remained to prevent it from being stolen by the Indians. The first, who was no other than Mr. Bates on his way to President Chauncy, was soon concealed by the thick underbrush which covered the land.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRIVATE CONVERSATION — GREEK AUTHORS CONSULTED—SOME LEARNED OPIFIONS.

AFTER walking about a mile from the place where he left his companion with the boat, Mr. Bates arrived at the residence of President Chauncy.

After indulging for a few moments in some

passing remarks upon the weather, the country, and the general health of the colony, Mr. Bates informed the president that he had come over to have a few minutes' particular conversation upon a subject in which he was greatly interested.

"Any assistance I can consistently render you shall cheerfully be given," said Chauncy.

Mr. Bates then informed him of his troubles of mind respecting baptism.

"Ah," said the president, with a peculiar expression of countenance, in which seriousness and pleasantry appeared to be equally blended, "did you not know that this is a proscribed subject with me?"

"I knew," said Strongfaith, "that it was the desire of those who called you to your present honored and responsible position, that you should not publicly preach what you conscientiously believed was the truth of God."

"Do you mean to signify," asked Chauncy, "that your impression was, that they expect me to preach or teach what I do not believe is truth?" at the same time rising and closing the door of the room, which answered the double purpose of chamber and study, that outer ears might not catch the conversation.

"By no means. They are too upright and honorable to ask you to practice such public hypocrisy."

"You do well to say that. The ministers and the government of the colony are noble-minded, godly men, who detest deception, especially

the discharge of the sacred functions of the gospel ministry. True, they do not wish me to propagate among the students and people what they are pleased to regard as my peculiar sentiments. But their tongue would cleave to the roof of their mouth before they would ask me to inculcate any doctrine which they knew I regarded as erroneous."

"I simply meant to say, in what I have just uttered, that I knew you were expected to keep silent upon a certain subject in which you believe ——"

"And yet," said the president, interrupting him, "upon that very subject you wish me to break silence."

This remark placed Mr. Bates in an unpleasant dilemma. Conscious of entire rectitude in the object of his visit, he was pained at the thought of being suspected of a dishonorable motive. With the confession which he had just made, especially as coupled with the rejoinder of Chauncy, he saw there was enough to excite such suspicion, and he feared that he had trespassed upon the good nature of the president too far. The subject now presented itself in a new light to him. Although he came as an honest inquirer, he was not certain of the propriety of coming even in that capacity. He began to feel that it was an extremely delicate thing to ask so important a personage as the president of a college a question touching a subject on which silence was a condition of his retaining his presidency. Besides, fearing that he was sinking

in the estimation of Chauncy, he was also losing his own self-respect. Yet below all this was another element which mingled with his experience; it was a feeling of independence arising from his conscious integrity, by which he was convinced that there was no reason for losing his self-respect, and that, by developing the purity of his intention to the president, he would rise also in Chauncy's esteem. These conflicting feelings of his heart alternated with each other, almost as rapidly as the lights and shadows cast upon the ceiling of the study by the interrupted reflections of the sun's rays from the troubled surface of the river.

In a moment a new idea occurred to him, which assisted in extricating him from his embarrassing position. "I will converse with him as a scholar instead of a theologian," thought he; "perhaps he may then view the object of my visit more favorably." So soon as this thought had distinctly formed itself in his mind, he said, though in a somewhat hesitating manner, "Regarding you, sir, as a man of learning, well skilled in the ancient languages, I have come to ask you the meaning of a certain Greek word, which is found repeatedly in the New Testament."

"O, ah, yes—I understand—you come to me as one of the faculty of this seat of learning, to ask me a question in philology; that alters the matter entirely;" and the good president letting both hands fall upon his knees, pushed back his great arm chair, raised himself in a more erect

position, and appeared as much relieved as was Bates himself. "Philology," continued he, "is a legitimate subject of investigation. To translate the ancient languages, and especially those in which the Holy Ghost spake to prophets and apostles, is to me a precious privilege. I see not how any one can make it a ground of complaint. What word is it that you wish to have rendered?"

"It is that word which expresses the act of baptizing," said Strongfaith.

"As a philologist, my reply is, that the word which, in the New Testament, expresses the act of baptism, is always the Greek word 'baptizo,' the first meaning of which is to immerse, dip, plunge, or overwhelm; and its secondary sense—if it may be said to have one—implies immersion—as washing, because done by immersion."

"How are we to know," asked Strongfaith, "when the word is used in its primary, and when in its secondary significations?"

"We learn it from the nature of the subject in connection with which the word is used. The general rule in the translation of one language into another is always to give a word its primary signification, unless such signification is incongruous with the context, or with the nature of the subject."

"Pardon me," continued Bates; "but as I wish to have this matter made as plain as possible, let me ask if this is what you mean—when I read any passage in any author where the word 'baptize' occurs, I must give to that word the

meaning of immersion, unless such meaning is entirely inconsistent with the context."

"Precisely so. That you may understand the matter clearly, I will show you some instances of the use of the word from the ancient authors."

The president rose from his large leather-bottomed arm-chair, and opened the dark door of what Bates had supposed was a large closet, or wardrobe, but which, when opened, he perceived, was well filled with books. It was his library.

Chauncy stooped down, and took from the lowest self a large folio volume, bound in what appeared to be dried parchment or sheep-skin. Seating himself in his arm-chair, he carefully opened the volume, saying, "This is a valuable edition of that old Greek author, Diodorus Siculus, who will inform us how baptizo was used in the days of Christ, for he wrote in the first century, before Christ. I will read from it into English two or three passages where the word 'baptizo,' in some of its grammatical forms, occurs; but instead of translating that word, I will use 'baptize,' and yourself will readily see how it should be rendered. The first is the account of a confusion of a fleet of vessels; it is as follows: 'The admiral's vessel being baptized, the armament was thrown into great disorder.'"

"He doubtless means," said Strongfaith, "that the admiral's vessels were sunk, and that this circumstance threw the fleet into great confusion."

Turning over a few pages, he read another: "'Most of the land animals that are overtaken by the river, (that is, in time of a freshet,) being baptized, perish.'"

"Surely, 'being baptized' in that passage," said Bates, "must mean being overwhelmed, or sunk; for how otherwise could the animals perish."

"Take another," said the president, opening the heavy volume at another place, and reading —"'The river rushing down with an impetuous current, baptized many, (that is, of the soldiers,) and carried them away as they were swimming with their arms.' How would you understand their being 'baptized' in that passage?"

"I think," said Strongfaith, "it means that they were overwhelmed by the rushing waters."

The president now replaced this book, and took down another, somewhat thicker, and bound in dark-colored leather, with two large brass clasps.

"This contains," said he, "the lives of many ancient warriors and philosophers, written by the laborious and learned Plutarch." He placed it upon a small reading stand with three crooked legs, the top of which was in imitation of an open book, and having found the passage he wanted, he read as follows: "In this whole company there was not to be seen a buckler, a helmet, or a spear; but instead of them, cups, flagons, and goblets. These the soldiers baptized in huge vessels of wine, and drank to each other." Then pausing, he asked Strongfaith what act he

supposed was indicated by the word 'baptized' in that passage.

"Undoubtedly dipping," was the reply. "They dipped out the wine with their cups and goblets, and then drank it."

"Here is another instance in this same author —it reads as follows: 'Even now, many of the weapons of the barbarians, bows, helmets, fragments of iron, breast-plates, and swords are found baptized in the mud, though it is almost two hundred years since the battle.' What do you think is meant by 'baptized' in that passage?" asked the president.

"I think the writer means to say that these weapons were *buried* in the mud."

"Certainly; and this idea of burying is expressed by the word 'baptized.' Here is Polybius, who wrote a little over one hundred and fifty years before Christ. He says, speaking of the army wading through water, 'The foot soldiers passed with difficulty *baptized* up to their breasts,' (iii. c. 72.) Have you any doubt as to its meaning here?"

"I have waded neck deep," said Bates, "and I am sure I was *immersed* to the neck."

"Well, here is Strabo, a Greek, who was born only about nineteen years after Christ, who used the term in the same sense. Speaking of Alexander's soldiers marching through the tide, between the mountain Climax and the sea, says they were baptized up to the middle, (xiv. p. 982.) And speaking of a lake in Sicily, he says, 'Things which otherwise will not swim, do not baptize in the lake but float like wood.'

"'And of a rivulet of Cappadocia, whose waters are so buoyant, that if an arrow is thrown in, it will hardly be *baptized* in them.'

"And in another place of the asphaltic lake Sirbon, the bitumen of which floats on top, because of the nature of the water, which admits no diving; for if a man goes into it he cannot *be baptized*, but is forcibly kept above.'"

"You have entirely satisfied us on this point," said Bates.

"But allow me to add one more," said Chauncy. "Let us now refer to a famous old Jewish writer, who lived in the days of the Emperor Vespasian, and was present at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, his general. In giving an account of the storm that overtook that unfaithful prophet, Jonah, Josephus says, 'that the sailors were not willing to cast the prophet overboard, until the ship was just going to be baptized.' How do you understand that?" asked the president in his usual professional style, as though Bates was one of his pupils.

"I understand him to say that those mariners hesitated about casting Jonah into the sea, until the vessel was just going to sink in the waves."

"Very good. Here is a similar use of the word," said he, as he opened the book in another place. "Speaking of a certain city, he says, 'The inhabitants left it as people swim away from a ship which is being baptized.'"

"Surely, he can mean nothing more than a sinking ship," replied Bates. Will you consider me presuming if I ask you as a scholar, if you have ever met with a Greek author who lived

about the time of Christ, who, in a solitary instance uses *baptizo*, literally, or figuratively, in the sense of to sprinkle or to pour upon."

"As a scholar I answer you, I never have, and I have examined them extensively and intelligently. They no more use *baptizo* in the sense of *rantizo*, than we do sprinkling for immersing."

"One more question seems pertinent to me, I understand that the Old Testament is also in Greek, can you produce a passage in which baptizo is used, where all agree that there was an immersion?"

"I understand that you ask me as a scholar?"

"Certainly, certainly, we know you may not teach theology in this place, or religious views contrary to those of the Church."

"Well, my friend, I can find a passage that informs us of a man who baptized himself seven times in the very river in which Christ was baptized," and taking down the Septuagint, he read the 14th verse of the 5th chapter of 2 Kings.

"'And Naaman went down and, "*ebaptizato en too Jordane* eptakis"—translated by James' translators very properly—*dipped himself in Jordan* seven times.' I would call your attention to the striking fact, that precisely the same words are used to record the baptism of the multitude by John in Matt. iii. 6, except that the verb is plural instead of singular—you can see its form"—pointing out the Greek words, *ebaptizonto en too Jordane.*

"I think it very clear," said Bates, 'from this

that if it is granted that Naaman dipped himself, that John dipped the multitude and the Saviour, and equally clear to my mind that the Saviour commanded his disciples and ministers in all ages to administer baptism by the same act to which he himself submitted, and by which all his apostles were baptized."

"You are at liberty to draw your own conclusions. I pronounce your *reasoning* logical."

Various other Greek authors were taken down by the president, and extracts read from them, in which the word "baptizo" occurred, and which Mr. Bates saw, unlearned as he was, should be translated "immerse, overwhelm," or by something equivalent.

"Sometimes," said the president, "the word is used metaphorically, and sometimes hyperbolically, and then it must be understood according to the rules for the interpretation of such use of language. A little common sense is a great help in such cases. These uses of the word, however, do not nullify the fact that its primary and common meaning is to immerse, or dip."

Here are a few out of many examples.

"Aristotle, De Mirabil. Ausc. speaks of a saying among the Phenicians, that there were certain places, beyond the pillars of Hercules, *which, when it is ebb tide, are not* OVERFLOWED (*μὴ βαπτίζεσθαι*), *but at full-tide are overflowed* (*καταχλύζεσθαι*); which word is here used as an equivalent for *βαπτίζεσθαι*.

"Heliodorus, Æthiop. Lib. IV., p. 192, *When midnight has overwhelmed* (*ἐβάπτιζον*) *the city*

with sleep. Lib. II. 3, OVERWHELMED (*βεβαπτισμένον*) *by misfortune.* See also IV. 20. V. 16.

"Clemens, Alex. Pæd. II. p. 182, *By intoxication* OVERWHELMED (*βαπτίζομενος*) *unto sleep.*

"Plato, Conviv. p. 176, *I myself am one of those who were* DRENCHED or OVERWHELMED (*βεβαπτισμένων*) *yesterday*, viz., with wine. In another place: *Having* OVERWHELMED (*βαπτίσασα*) *Alexander with much wine.* Euthydem. p. 277, ed. Heindorf, *A youth* OVERWHELMED (*βαπτιζομενον*), viz., with questions.

"Lucian, Tom. III. p. 81, *He is like one dizzy and* OVERWHELMED (*βεβαπτισμένῳ*), viz., with wine; used like our vulgar word *fuddled.*

"Josephus, Ant. X. 9. 4: *Seeing him in this condition and* OVERWHELMED (*βεβαπτισμένον*) *by excessive drinking into shamelessness and sleep.*

"Philo Judaeus, Vol. II. p. 478, *I know some, who, when they easily become intoxicated, before they are entirely* OVERWHELMED (*πρὶν τελέως βαπτισθῆναι*), viz., with wine.

"Justin Martyr, Dialog. cum Tryphone, p. 313: *βεβαπτισμένος ἁμαρτιαις*, OVERWHELMED *with sins.*

"Plutarch, Tom. VI. p. 30, *The soul is nourished by moderate labors, but is* OVERWHELMED (*βαπτίζεται*) *by excessive ones.* In his Moralia, Tom. III. p. 1504, he speaks of Galba as *ὀφλήμασι βεβαπτισμένον*, OVERWHELMED *with debts.* In Opp. VIII. p. 345, he says: *ὑπὸ τῶν πραγμάτων βαπτιζομένονς*, OVERWHELMED *with business.*

"Chrysostom, as quoted by Suicer, Thes. Ecc. I. p. 623. *Ὑπὸ μέθης βαπτισθῆναι*, *to be* OVER-

WHELMED *with wine;*—OVERWHELMED (*βαπτιζόμενος*) *with innumerable cares;—having the mind* OVERWHELMED (*βεβαπτισμένον*) *with a multitude of cares;* OVERWHELMED (*βαπτιζόμενοι*) *on all sides by the many waves of business;*—IMMERGED (*βεβαπτισμένος*) *in malignity.*—Justin Martyr: OVERWHELMED (*βαπτισθείς*) *in drunkenness.*"

"I am fully satisfied on this point," said Bates, "but allow me to ask whether learned men generally admit that this is its original signification?"

"As to that, I am willing that they should speak for themselves. Having investigated this word historically as well as philologically," continued the learned president, "I have had occasion to consult the opinions of others, and therefore can turn at once to the volume and the page where their decision is recorded." During the utterance of this language, he crossed the room, and reached from his library a volume which had the appearance of being greatly used.

"This is a work of Calvin, the eminent Genevan divine. In it I find the following passage, distinguished both for its clearness and strength." He then read as follows: "'The very word 'baptize,' however, signifies to immerse; and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient Church.' You can have no doubt as to what was his opinion."

"I think not," replied Strongfaith.

"Hear, now, what Martin Luther, the great reformer, says." Opening a volume of Luther's

works, he read as follows: "'The term "baptism" is a Greek word. It may be rendered a dipping, as when we dip something in water, that it may be entirely covered with water. And though that custom be quite abolished among the generality, (for neither do they entirely dip children, but only sprinkle them with a little water,) nevertheless they ought to be wholly immersed, and presently to be drawn out again. For the etymology seems to require it."

After replacing Luther upon the shelf, the president recrossed the room, and took from his study table a smaller volume, which had quite a fresh appearance. "Here," said he, "is a book written by a learned professor from the north of Holland. His name is Witsius. I was just looking it over as you came in;" and then turning over a few leaves, said, "He uses the following language: 'It cannot be denied that the native signification of the word "baptize" is to plunge, to dip.' Hear, also, what Vitringa says: 'The act of baptizing is the immersion of believers in water. This expresses the force of the word. Thus also it was administered by Christ and his apostles.' I could quote to you various other authors who bear similar testimony to the meaning of the word."

"*But did the early Christians understand the word to mean immersion, and did they so represent it in their practice?*" said Bates.

"I will give you a few instances," and going to the shelves he selected an armful of old musty books, and read out these examples:

"Barnabas, who lived in the second century, says: 'We descend into the water and come out of it.' Ep. c. 11,

"Hermas, Pastor, 3. 'Men descend into the water bound to death, but ascend out of it sealed to life.' Augusti, 7, 77, after quoting the passage at length, adds: 'this passage contains distinct evidence of the *custom of immersion.*'

"Justin Martyr, (A. D. 155,) in giving the pagans a general account of Christian doctrines and practices, says: 'Those who believe are *led to some place where there is water*, and *then bathe in the water.*' In his Questio, 13, 7, he says: 'We represent our Lord's sufferings and resurrection by baptism *in a pool—κολυμβηθρα.*'

"There can be no doubt what is meant by bathing in a pool, or swimming-place, in such a manner as to represent the death and resurrection of Christ. This is not the description of any one case of baptism, but a *universal description.*

"Tertullian, (A. D. 198), says: 'We are immersed in water' (*mergimur*, in another passage *mergitamur*):—'let down into the water and dipped' (tinctus):—Peter immersed (*tinxit*) in the Tiber; 'it is one thing to be *sprinkled* (aspergi) by the violence of the waves in a boat, and another to be *dipped* (tingui) in a religious ordinance;' 'it is indifferent whether one is baptized in the sea or in a pool, in a river or fountain, in a lake or the bed of a river.' The flood he calls 'the baptism of the world;'—'we little fishes are born in the water.' This expression,

and the 'tower' of Hermas, which can be entered only 'through the water,' we should suppose, were they not in Latin, were the sayings of some of our progenitors. He makes no allusion to sprinkling, but expresses immersion by almost every Latin word that could be used.

"Apostolic Constitutions, Lib. 3, c. 17. 'Baptism relates to the death of Christ: the water answers to the grave (*αντιταφης*); the *immersion* (*καταδυσις*) represents our dying with him: the *emersion* (*αναδυσις*) our rising with him.'

"These were supposed to have been written in the first century.

"Clement of Alexandria, Mystagog. 2. 'You were led to a bath, as Christ was conveyed to the sepulchre, and were thrice immersed, to signify Christ's three days' burial.' Clement wrote in year 204.*

"Cyril of Jerusalem, Cat. 17. 'He who is immersed in water and baptized, is surrounded with water on all sides'—*πανταχωθεν*. And Cat. Mystag. 2. 'As in the night, so in immersion, as if it were night, you can see nothing.'

"Basil the Great, De Spiritu Sancto, 15. 'By three immersions we represent the death of Christ;'—'the bodies of those that are baptized

* Trine immersion of the *naked* candidate was the earliest corruption of baptism. Professor Stuart very justly says, "The argument to be deduced from it, in respect to immersion, is not at all diminished. *Nay, it is strengthened.* For if such a violation of decency was submitted to, in order that baptism might be performed as the Church thought it should be, it argues that baptizing by immersion was considered as a rite not to be dispensed with.—*Stuart on Baptism*, p. 151.

J. R. G.

are, as it were, buried in water' (*ενθαπτεται τῳ ὑδατι*). He wrote in the year 370.

"Gregory Nyssen, De Bap. Christi. 'Coming to the water we conceal (*εκκρυπτομεν*) ourselves in it, as the Saviour concealed himself in the earth.' And Orat. Cat. 35. 'Being thrice overwhelmed in the water and again raised from it, we imitate the burial and resurrection of Christ.' Again: 'All the dead are buried under ground, instead of which, water is used in baptism.' He wrote in the year 380.

"Chrysostom, 25, Hom. on John, often quoted. 'When our heads enter the water, as a tomb, the old man is buried, and plunging down is wholly concealed all at once'—*και καταδυς κατω κρυπτετυι ὁλος καθαπαξ*. Hom. 17. 'Our Lord delivered to his disciples one baptism by three immersions.' This author was a learned Greek, and wrote in the year 400.

"Theodoret on Rom. vi. 4. 'Baptism is a type of our Lord's death;' and on Heb. vi. 2. 'In holy baptism we receive the type of the resurrection.' A. D. 440.

"Theophylact on Col. iii. 1. 'Baptism typifies by immersion the death, by emersion the resurrection of Christ.' A. D. 700.

"John Damascene, Lib. 4, c. 9. "Baptism represents (*δηλοῖ*) the death of our Lord,'—'it is a type (*τυπος*) of his death;'—'the first baptism was the flood;"—'the old man was entirely buried in the water.' A. D. 700.

"Ambrose, De Sacramentis, 2, 7. 'You immersed yourself (*mersisti*), *i. e.*, you were buried.'

The words variously employed by him to describe the act are, *immergo*, *immersio*, *emersio*, *mergo*, *ascendens de fonte*, and the like, but he *never* uses those which mean to sprinkle, and he wrote in the year 370.

"Dionysius Areopag. De Eccl. Hierarchia, 2. 'The total concealment in water (ἡ δὶ ὕδατος ὅλικη καλυψις) fitly represents Christ's death and burial.' A. D. 500.

"Leo, Bishop of Rome, Decret. 9. 'Trine immersion represents the three days' burial of Christ.' A. D. 500.

"Council of Toledo, held in 633. 'The immersion in water (in aquis mersio) is, as it were, the descent to Hades, and the emersion from the water, the resurrection.'

"I presume these are enough—*all historians* agree that immersion was the practice of the first centuries."

"Certainly, I hope I am neither so slow to apprehend or unwilling to believe, but these things being so, how came immersion to be laid aside, and sprinkling substituted in its place."

"I submit no opinion, but I can read you a passage out of an old Catholic author. This is a volume of the works of that celebrated French orator, Bossuet, Archbishop of Meaux. I will read a few paragraphs to you as it is in French:

"'In fine, we read not in the Scripture that baptism was otherwise administered than by immersion; and we are able to make it appear by the acts of councils, and by the ancient rituals, that for thirteen hundred years baptism was

thus administered throughout the whole Church, as far as was possible.'

"'The very word used in the rituals to express the action of the godfathers and godmothers, saying, they *lift up* the child *from the baptismal font*, is sufficient to show that the child was plunged in it.

"'Though these are incontestable truths, yet neither we nor *those of* the pretended *reformed religion* hearken to the Anabaptists, who hold immersion to be essential and indispensable; nor have either *they* or *we feared to change this dipping* (as I may say) of the whole body, *into a bare aspersion or infusion on one part of it.* No other reason of this alteration can be rendered, than that this dipping is not of the substance of baptism; and those of the pretended reformed religion agreeing with us in this, the first principle we have laid down is incontestable.'

"And in another place, 'Jesus Christ (says he) has ordered to *dip*, as we have often observed. We have also taken notice, that he was baptized in this form, that his apostles practiced it, and *that it was continued in the Church down to the twelfth and thirteenth ages;* and yet baptism given only by infusion is admitted, without any difficuly, ON THE SOLE AUTHORITY OF THE ROMISH CHURCH.'

"'Experience has shown that all the attempts of the reformed to confound the Anabaptists by the Scripture, have been weak; and therefore they are at last obliged to allege to them the practice of the Church. We see in their Disci-

pline, at the end of the eleventh chapter, the form of receiving adult persons into their communion, where they make the proselyted Anabaptist acknowledge that the baptism of infants *is founded on Scripture, and on the perpetual practice of the Church.* When the pretended reformed believe they have the word of God very expressly on their side, they are not wont to build on the perpetual practice of the Church. But in this case, because the Scripture furnishes them with nothing by which they are able to stop the mouths of the Anabaptists, it was necessary to rely on somewhat else, and at the same time to confess that in these matters the perpetual practice of the Church is of inviolable authority.'

"You can draw your own conclusions upon the authority of this learned Roman Catholic archbishop. His statement is sustained by other learned Catholics, and is incontestible."

"Then, my conclusion comes of itself. The Romish Church, which is represented in Scripture as the Man of Sin, who presumes to change times and laws, has laid his hands upon Christian baptism, and changed the act from *immersion* to sprinkling or pouring upon, and the reformers sanctioned the change by adopting it into their practice."

"You violate no rule of logic in your process of reasoning," said Chauncy, "but it is now my hour for dinner. Stay with me and dine, and if you wish we can resume this conversation."

This kind invitation Bates declined. He had

obtained all he came for, and was now desirous to depart. They walked together to the front door of the house, conversing as they went, and then respectfully took leave of each other. Bates had withdrawn from the house but a few steps before Chauncy called after him—

"Hold; here is one other historical fact of too much importance for you not to consider. And that has reference to the practice of the Greek Church. The Greeks, of course, understand their own language. Now, it is a significant fact that the Greek Church has for ages been in the habit of administering baptism by immersion, because they understand that to be the meaning of the word. Where can we find better umpires?"

"A single question more," said Bates, "which I meant to have asked before. Did not the Greeks have words which signified to sprinkle and to pour?"

"Certainly. 'Rantizo' means to sprinkle, and 'cheo' signifies to pour."

"Are these words ever used in the New Testament in describing the ordinance of baptism?"

"Never, never!" said the president, with emphasis.

"It is certainly very strange," added Strongfaith, "if baptism was anciently administered by sprinkling or pouring, that those words are never used in describing the act, but, on the contrary, that word is always employed which signifies to immerse."

"Very strange, very."

"Is it not likely, sir, that if sprinkling or pouring had, in any instance, been practiced, that word would have been employed by the sacred writers to describe the scene, which signifies to pour or to sprinkle?"

"You are as able to answer that question as I," said the president; "so farewell, for I must be gone;" and he slowly walked away to the house.

CHAPTER IX.

MIDNIGHT INTERVIEW.

BATES retraced his steps through the underbrush, found the boatman where he left him, and soon recrossed the river.

During the remainder of the day, no opportunity was offered for conversation with Stephen; but in the evening, after the last customer had left the store, and when the first favorable moment for inquiring had presented itself, Stephen asked the result of the Cambridge interview.

"Close the store, and you shall know."

Stephen shut the window shutters, and fastened them, then closed the door, and locked it on the inside. Strongfaith was sitting in an old, broken, rush-bottom chair, with the Bible in his

hand; a rushlight, in a greasy brass candlestick, stood on the corner of the counter. The picture was completed by Stephen seating himself upon a rough sugar box in front of Mr. Bates.

"Now," said he, "tell me all about it."

Strongfaith related as fully as he could remember, the details of the conversation.

"If all that the president told you is true, it certainly furnishes a strong arguments for the Baptists."

"I think as much; and suppose, now we are alone, that we examine some of the prominent instances of baptism recorded in the New Testament in the light of the information with which he has furnished us. Let us look at them, and see whether the various circumstances connected with them are in harmony with immersion, or whether they are more consonant with some other mode of administration."

It is not necessary to give at length the conversation of these two sincere and earnest inquirers after truth. It will be sufficient for our purpose to say that the conclusion at which they arrived was, that the various circumstances which are related in connection with the New Testament baptisms, were absolutely necessary, in case immersion was the practice; whilst, on the other hand, they were not only unnecessary, but also incongruous with any other mode.

"It seems to me," said Strongfaith, "that the evidence is almost, if not quite, conclusive that primitive baptism was administered by immersion. Let us group these circumstances which

we have examined, together. The primary meaning of the word 'baptize' is to immerse. Christ was baptized *in* Jordan; after being baptized, he came up *out of the water;* John baptized at Enon, near to Salem, because there was *much water* there; when Philip baptized the eunuch, the went both of them *down into the water*, and after the baptism they *came up out of the water;* and Paul says we are *buried* with Christ by baptism unto death; that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. And here again, in his Epistle to the Colossians, he says, 'Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God.' Buried by baptism; the burial *is in the ordinance*, and in this also is the resurrection spoken of; for Paul is explicit in saying, 'Ye are buried with Christ in baptism, wherein, *i. e.*, in which baptism ye also are risen with him.' The *burial* and the *resurrection* are *in the baptism*, and these, whilst they remind the believer of the burial and resurrection of Christ, as the grounds of his Christian hope, are, at the same time, beautifully symbolical of the believer's death unto sin, and his resurrection to a new life. It cannot be denied that Paul's language on these passages is in perfect harmony with baptism by immersion, but it is entirely incongruous if the ordinance were administered in any other way. Where is there any burial or resurrection in the act of sprinkling or of pouring? There is none.

"All these circumstances, whether considered singly or together—this baptizing where there was much water—going down into the water—coming up out of the water—being buried and raised again—were not only harmonious with, but were absolutely necessary to, immersion, but not to any other mode. It is certainly very strange that all these circumstantial incidents should have been mentioned, if the ordinance did not require them; and it certainly would not have required them if it had been administered by sprinkling or pouring."

"Hark!" said Stephen; "did I not hear voices and footsteps by the door?"

"I should think not," replied Strongfaith. "It is now midnight. The colonists are in bed; probably not a family is awake, except where sickness exists." A slight noise at the door, like that of persons stepping on the ground, caused him to pause. He then added, "You may be correct, but if so, they are probably some sailors who have wandered from their vessel, and on their return have come this way to see whether the store was open."

"Perhaps our light shines through the crevices of the doors and shutters, and attracts them."

Stephen was correct. Pynchon and Endicott, who had been attending a conference at the house of Parson Cotton, to deliberate upon the best measures to be adopted for the suppression of heresy in the colony, and where, by the interest of the subject, their conversation had

been continued late into the night, were on their way home. Seeing, through the chinks and crevices of Bates' store, a light, their attention was arrested.

"What does that mean?" said Endicott; "are thieves plundering Bates's store? He usually closes the trucking house and goes home early."

"It would not be surprising," said Pynchon, "if Bates himself was there, holding converse with some of the *suspected* ones, or perhaps trying to pervert to a baptistical use those passages of the Holy Scriptures to which I found the leaves of his Bible turned down the other day."

"He truly has selected an appropriate time for his deeds of darkness, if the case is as you suppose."

"It always has been so, brother; heretics love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. Being children of the night, and not of the day, they shrink like owls and bats from the light."

The two Puritans had now reached the store. To gratify their curiosity, they paused at the door. Through one of the crevices, by means of which the light within had been betrayed, they could see the employer and his clerk in earnest conversation. It required no effort to hear what was said. The last words which we have recorded as having been uttered by Strongfaith, they heard with perfect distinctness.

"What do you think of that?" asked Endicott.

"Think! It is just what I have supposed for some weeks," replied Pynchon.

"Not satisfied with being infected by this loathsome leprosy himself, here he is, like some foul wizard, laboring at midnight to bewitch this unsuspecting youth, and infuse the contagion into his soul..'

His voice arrested the attention of Stephen, as has already been described. They perceived that they were heard, and, not wishing to be known, they hastily left the door, and pressed towards home. When Stephen opened the door, and looked out into the darkness, he could see nothing but the indistinct forms of two unknown men in the distance, who soon disappeared entirely from view.

The conversation having been in this manner interrupted, and the door being open, Mr. Bates told Stephen he thought they had better close the store for the night, and resume the conversation some other time.

CHAPTER X.

A STRANGE LETTER.

THE language which Pynchon and Endicott had heard Bates employ whilst they were standing by the door of the store, was sufficient to confirm their previous suspicions of his sympathy with the Baptists, if not to convince them that he was fully converted to their views. They informed Parson Cotton, and the prominent members of the Church, of what they had seen and heard. It soon became noised abroad that Bates was a Baptist. On the Sabbath, and on lecture days, when he attended meeting, especially when any allusions were made to the prevailing heresies, or when children were brought to be christened, many a furtive glance was cast towards his pew, to see what effect was produced upon him. If he closed his eyes, or turned away his head, or accidentally coughed, it was construed into strong evidence against him. It was not long before Strongfaith discovered the feelings and suspicions of the Puritans towards him. He saw that he was an object of particular observation; that a coolness was growing up in the minds of former friends towards him; that his custom was falling off; and that the

brethren of the Church did not meet, as formerly, for conversation at his store. He plainly perceived that he was losing caste. This, however, did not deter him from prosecuting his inquiries upon the general subject of baptism. Since his conversation with Chauncy, his mind had become much clearer upon the mode.

He had the meaning as given by the lexicons, and the use of those ancient Greek writers who lived about the time of Christ, and, therefore, must have used the term *baptizo* in the same sense that Christ and the apostles did. He was forced to admit that the usual signification as to dip, to immerse, and the rule laid down was, that it must in every instance have this meaning, unless the context forbids it. In every passage where immerse, or to dip, or overwhelm will make sense, one of these must be used.

He resolved to read the New Testament through, and examine every passage in which baptize and baptism occur; and trying each by the three claimants—*i. e.*, to *immerse*, to *sprinkle*, to *pour*, and see which term in the majority of cases would make the best sense.

Here is a specimen of his experiments:

Matt. iii. 6.

The people, &c., "were *immersed* of him *in* Jordan," &c.
The people, &c., "were *sprinkled* of him *in* Jordan," &c.
The people, &c., "were *poured* of him *in* Jordan," &c.

To pour or sprinkle people in or into a river he saw was palpably absurd, while, to immerse them in or into a river, not only made sense, but only would make sense.

Matt. iii. 16.

And Jesus, when he was *immersed*, and went up straightway *out of the water*, &c.
And Jesus, when he was *sprinkled*, (i. e. upon,) and went up straightway *out of the water*, &c.
And Jesus, when he was *poured*, (i. e. upon,) and went up straightway *out of the water*, &c.

Mark i. 5.

And were all *immersed* of him in the river of Jordan, &c.
And were all *sprinkled* of him in the river of Jordan, &c.
And were all *poured* of him in the river of Jordan, &c.

BAPTISM OF JESUS.—Mark i. ix.

And was *immersed* of John *in* Jordan.
And was *sprinkled* of John *in* Jordan.
And was *poured* of John *in* Jordan.

"To immerse alone," he said, "makes sense in the above two passages, since dust, ashes, or water, or any divisible substance could be sprinkled or poured, but not the *body* of a person. And then to *sprinkle or pour in the river* of Jordan, was certainly an incongruous idea, and equally so to say, sprinkled or poured *with the* river of Jordan!!

That the Saviour was immersed in the river of Jordan, he considered it wicked to doubt.

John iii. 23.

John was *immersing* in Ænon, &c., because their was much water there, &c.
John was *sprinkling* in Ænon, &c., because their was much water there, &c.
John was *pouring* in Ænon, &c., because there was much water there, &c.

The places John selected for baptism, he considered of itself convincing evidence that he immersed the people as well as Christ.

Acts viii. 38, 39.

And they went down both into the water, both Philip *and* the eunuch, and he *immersed* him, &c.
And they went down both into the water, both Philip *and* the eunuch, and he *sprinkled* him, &c.
And they went down both into the water, both Philip *and* the eunuch, and he *poured* him, &c.

This question was forced upon his conscience, Why did both go down into the water, both the administrator and the subject, unless it was for the purpose of immersion?

Luke xii. 50.

But I have a *baptism* to be *baptized* with.
But I have a *sprinkling* to be *sprinkled* with.
But I have a *pouring* to be *poured* with.

The term is used here in a figurative sense—the Saviour speaking of the sufferings soon to overwhelm him, compares them to a baptism—were they to be so slight as to be compared to a mere sprinkling or to an immersion, an overwhelming flood?

Rom. vi. 3.

So many of us as were *immersed*? *sprinkled*? *poured*? into Jesus Christ, were immersed? sprinkled? poured? into his death.

The language is figurative—baptized into the *representation* or likeness of his *death*. Can any act but immersion represent any likeness of death? a burial is a representation of death.

Rom. vi. 4.

Therefore, (i. e., for this very reason—to represent death,) we are *buried* with him by *immersion* into death.
Therefore, (i. e., for this very reason—to represent death,) we are *buried* with him by *sprinkling* into death.
Therefore, (i. e., for this very reason—to represent death,) we are *buried* with him by *pouring* into death.

There can be no form of a burial and a raising up again, to represent the burial and resurrection of Christ, in a pouring or sprinkling.

Col. ii. 12.

Buried with him in *immersion*, &c.
Buried with him in *sprinkling*, &c.
Buried with him in *pouring*, &c.

He had no desire but to obey and follow Christ, and be governed by the plain teachings of the Scriptures, and the examination left not a doubt upon his mind as to what they taught, and that immersion was the general practice of all Christians for full thirteen hundred years after Christ, Professor Chauncy had sufficiently proved in that interview.

Although he foresaw the sacrifices in which the adoption of such a view would at once involve him, he hesitated not a moment. "I may not trifle with the commands of Christ," he would say, "I may not construe the Scriptures to suit my own feelings or convenience. Nor does it matter to me, or excuse me that others think and act otherwise—though great and learned ministers. I must examine and obey for myself—since I must be judged for myself."

Having fully satisfied his mind touching the scriptural act of baptism, he turned his attention to the appropriate subjects of the ordinance.

Whilst pursuing his investigations upon this point, it fortunately happened that ex-President Dunster, who had retired to Scituate after

his departure from Cambridge, visited Boston.* Strongfaith, after much contrivance, finally obtained a private interview with him, and learned from him the reasons of his rejection of infant baptism. Dunster was a clear and forcible reasoner. He could present a subject in a strong light. His conversations with others upon the exciting topic of infant baptism had so shaken their faith, and troubled their minds, that they attributed it to satanic influence. At a time when he refused to have his own infant baptized, and came out publicly, in a sermon, "against the administration of baptism to any infant whatsoever," he was visited by Rev. Jonathan Mitchel, who was subsequently, if not at that very time, the Puritan minister at Cambridge. Instead of convincing Dunster that he was error, he came near being convinced that he had embraced a false doctrine himself; for in his account of the results of this interview, Mitchel says, with a blending of simplicity and superstition, if not with a mingling of bigotry. "After I came from him, I found hurrying and pressing suggestions against Pædo-baptism, and injected scruples and thoughts whether the other way might not be

* Dunster, first president of Harvard College, as Cotton Mather expresses it, "fell into the briars of Anti-Pedobaptism," while he held that office. Quincy, in his History of Harvard College, says: "Indicted by the grand jury for disturbing the ordinance of infant baptism in the Cambridge Church, convicted by the court, sentenced to a public admonition on lecture day, and laid under bonds for good behavior, Dunster's martyrdom was consummated by being compelled in October, 1654, to resign his office of President, and to ihrow himself upon the tender mercies of the General Court."

This was the spirit of Pedobaptism in the days of our fathers, and this is its spirit to-day. Did the Church of Christ, did the saints of Jesus ever persecute?

right, and infant baptism an invention of men, and whether I might with good conscience baptize children, and the like. And these thoughts were darted in with some impression, and left a strange confusion and sickliness upon my spirit. Yet methought it was not hard to discern that *they were from the* EVIL ONE. First, because they were rather injected, hurrying suggestions, than any deliberate thoughts, or bringing any light with them. Secondly, because they were unreasonable, interrupting me in my study for the Sabbath, and putting my spirit into confusion, so as I had much ado to do aught in my sermon. * * * It was a check to my former self-confidence, and it made me fearful to go needlessly to Mr. D., for methought I found a venom and poison in his insinuations and discourses against pedobaptism. I resolved, also, on Mr. Hooker's principle, that I would have an argument *able to move a mountain* before I would recede from or appear against a truth or practice *received among the faithful.*" *

It need excite no surprise that a man, whose powers of argument could produce effects upon an educated minister, which the latter attributed to Satanic agency, should also have had considerable influence with Strongfaith. He presented such objections against the practice of infant baptism, that Bates found himself unable to reply to them. Not to render this account tedious to the reader, it must suffice to say in brief, that both Bates and Stephen embraced the Baptist

* This veritable letter Backus quotes from Mitchel's Life.

views of the ordinance. Still they attended meeting with the regular Congregational Church in Boston. Stephen, however, did not make a public profession of religion, though in other respects he lived an exemplary Christian life.

One Sabbath, when Parson Cotton was administering what he called the seal of the covenant to one of the infants of the Church, Strongfaith. to show his entire want of sympathy with the service, turned his back to the pulpit. He wished it to be understood that he had no faith in the authority or utility of the ordinance. He felt it to be his duty to bear, in some manner, his public testimony against what he now regarded as an unscriptural, human invention, and for this reason he resolved to turn his back whenever the service might be performed. His conduct created great excitement in the congregation.

CHAPTER XI.

THREE STRANGERS

ONE Saturday, in the month of July, 1651, three strangers, who had journeyed far, and were weary, hungry, and thirsy, arrived at Boston.

"Well pleased am I," said one, whose name was Clark, "that Christian people dwell here, although in some points they differ from us."

"Yes," replied one of his companions, who wore a brown coat with long and broad skirts, and great pockets opening on the outside, "yes, this is one of the cities of Zion, and yonder I see their sanctuary," at the same time pointing to the meeting-house.

"No doubt, then, Brother Holmes, the people will remember the words of the Saviour about a cup of cold water given to a disciple, for I feel as if a draught at this time would be exceedingly refreshing."

"I sympathize with you in that feeling, Brother Crandall," said the first speaker, "and I never saw the force of that passage of Solomon as I do now—'As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.' It seems to me I never longed for a good drink as I do at this moment."

"With me," said Holmes, "it is not so much thirst as hunger."

"Well, well, cheer up, brethren, for these Christian friends are doubtless given to hospitality, and will readily relieve our wants. And if not, we can go to the tavern, and pay for meals and a lodging, though we abound not in filthy lucre."

They now reached a house standing by itself on the outskirts of the town. As they approached it, they noticed that a woman closed the door, as if to signify that their approach was unwelcome.

"Perhaps," said Crandall, "she thinks we are thieves, or pirates, and that she would not be safe in our company."

"A word of explanation will remove her error."

They soon reached the house and knocked at the door; but no one opened it. They knocked again, louder than at first.

"Ye had better go 'long," said the shrill, cracked voice of an old woman on the inside.

"We are wayfaring strangers," said Mr. Clark, "faint and hungry, who wish merely to rest for a few moments, and obtain some refreshments."

"Ye must go then to the magistrates," replied the shrill feminine voice, "for I have no licence."

"Licence! licence! What does she mean by that?"

"We are not acquainted with your magistrates," said Clark, speaking through the door.

"And we hope we never may be officially," added Crandall, in an undertone, which could be heard only by his companions, who smiled at the remark. "And we know not what you mean by a licence," continued Clark.

The shrill, cracked voice now came from the window. It proved to be that of the short, crooked-back, loquacious Mrs. Strangger. Putting her head out of the window, she said,—

"Why, la, didn't you know that the Gineral Court had passed a law that nobody should entertain strangers without a partickler licence from two magistrates?* Gracious, I thought everybody knew that, for it has made talk enough. Why, no longer ago than yesterday, one of our godly elders refused to receive a trader, although he had every reason to believe him a good man, jist because he had no licence, and said the laws must be obeyed."

"Well, can thee not furnish us a little bread and water?"

"If ye can make it appear that that is not entertaining strangers, I can," replied the prudent little lady.

"Do ye not remember what is said about entertaining strangers unawares?"

"I would do it, with pleasure, if I only had a licence. Our magistrates are so afraid of entertaining Anabaptists, Familists, and other heretics unawares, that they have passed this law for our protection."

* Hubbard's New England, p. 413, edition of 1815. Benedict's Hist., p. 371.

The three strangers looked at each other with a singular but significant expression of countenance.

"Go ye, and get a permit from the magistrates, and I will give ye the best my poor house affords."

Mrs. Strangger would gladly have admitted them for the pleasure of having some one hear her talk, and for the opportunity which their visit would have afforded of picking up some new items which she could have converted into materials for gossip. But she knew that she was already a *suspected person*, and she feared to increase these suspicions. Seeing, just at this moment, one of the colonists in the distance, coming along the road towards them, she said to the strangers, in a hurried manner, and in tones indicative of fear,—

"If ye would not get a poor, lone woman into trouble, ye had better go 'long. Here are witnesses at hand, and it might go hard with me if I let ye in my house."

They felt the force of this appeal, and moved on.

"Strange place this," said Crandall, "where a stranger cannot have given him a crust of bread, nor a cup of water, without the permission of two magistrates."

"If the magistrates happen to be absent when strangers arrive, I suppose they must fast, and sleep out doors until the magistrates return, and, in their great kindness, licence some one to perform the first acts of hospitality."

"In our case," said Clark, "it is probable that no licence would be given. If that timid old woman assigned the true reason of this law, it was designed as an embargo upon such as we. No one could get a licence to entertain us without telling who and what we were; and to reveal that would be fatal to their application. They would be forbidden to harbor us."

"Our prospects are not the most flattering. But here comes a person who may, perhaps, help us."

CHAPTER XII.

A SINGULAR INVITATION.

THE individual referred to at the close of the last chapter was no other than the brother of the mill, whom the old lady had seen the distance, and who had now reached the travellers. They accosted him, told him they were strangers, and asked him were they could receive hospitality.

"As to that our rulers are very jealous lest hospitality should be extended to unsuitable persons, and therefore require the licence of the magistrates to authorize the virtue. But if ye will go with me, I will show you where there is a house which no one will prevent you from en-

tering, and where there is food which no one will forbid your eating. If ye understand, follow me."

There was something so original, hearty, and frank in this invitation, that they accepted it. They did understand, and were resolved not to compromise the stranger for his kindness. During the walk to the house, the conversation assumed such a character that the parties found that they were in sympathy with each other in their religious views. The walk was not long. When they reached the threshold, the brother said,—

"This is my house. I will neither invite ye in nor forbid ye to enter; ye may do as ye please; but as ye have commenced following me, ye will probably continue." They understood, and followed him in.

When the dinner was ready, he said, at the same time preventing, with difficulty, the smiles from playing upon his countenance,—

"Here is food. I will neither ask ye to taste it nor prohibit ye from eating it; ye may do as ye please; but hungry men, with a meal before them, are never at a loss." They understood again, and were soon at work discussing, with a relish which keen hunger alone can give, the plain, but healthful diet before them. It is scarcely necessary to intimate to the reader that the object of this caution on the part of Eaton was to throw the whole responsibility of their proceeding upon the three men themselves, so that he might avoid the liability of a conviction under this arbitrary law.

During the conversation that ensued, the trio of travellers understood that the colony was agitated upon the subject of baptism; the ministers and rulers were exceedingly fearful of Baptist sentiments, and were vigilant in discovering and severe in treating all of that sect.

Leaving this hospitable family, they prosecuted their journey towards Lynn, where they arrived in the latter part of the afternoon.

At a distance of two or three miles from the main village stood a small house, partly built of logs, in which resided an old man by the name of William Witter. He was a member of the the Baptist Church which had been gathered at Newport, it being the nearest Church to him at the time he joined. In consequence of his age he was unable to meet with his brethren at Newport, and therefore had requested his Church to send some of its members to visit him. His request was complied with, and John Clark, Obadiah Holmes, and Crandall were appointed to that service. Clark and Holmes were both Baptist ministers. Clark was the pastor of the Church. Subsequently, Holmes became his successor in that office.

Whether these representatives of the Newport Church attracted attention and awakened suspicion by enquiring where Witter lived, or whether this brother had given notice that he was expecting some of his Church to see him it is difficult now to tell; but certain it is, the magistrates were alarmed, and ordered the constable to be on the alert for the apprehension of any suspicious persons. The travellers found Wit-

ter's house, and received a cordial greeting. The old man was overjoyed to see them. He little thought of the painful and protracted trials which this fraternal visit would occasion. Both parties had so much to say that conversation was continued until late in the night.

CHAPTER XIII.

RESULTS OF A MEETING.

THE next day being the Sabbath, and the meeting-house being at so great a distance, it was proposed that they should have worship where they were, and that Mr. Clark should preach. Father Witter would thus have an opportunity of listening to his own pastor, whom he had not been privileged to hear for a long time.

Accordingly, in that rough-built, solitary private house, social religious services were observed. After the offering of praise and prayer, Mr. Clark announced his text. Believing from his own experience, and from the indications of the times, that a period of unusual temptation and trial was about to befall the people of God, he had selected, as an appropriate passage from which to discourse, Revelations, third chapter and tenth verse—"Because thou hast kept the

word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." During the delivery of his introduction, four or five strangers unexpectedly came in, and quietly took seats with the little domestic congregation. Having finished his introduction, Mr. Clark said, "In opening this interesting passage of holy writ for your serious meditation, I shall in the first place show what is meant by the hour of temptation—secondly, what we are to understand by the word of his patience, with the character of those who keep it—and thirdly, the soul-cheering encouragement which is furnished by the promise that those who keep this word shall themselves be kept in the hour of temptation and trial."

He proceeded in his discourse with increasing earnestness, the little audience, in the meanwhile, giving the closest attention. Father Witter, sitting in an old, high-backed arm chair, in one corner of the room, was listening with tearful eyes and open mouth, as though he had not heard the true doctrine for many months. It was to him a great luxury to hear his own pastor in his own house, treat so appropriate and comforting a subject as the one he had announced. Alas! the sweetness of the occasion was soon converted into gall. These unknown, harmless strangers, observing Sabbath worship in a remote part of the town, for the especial comfort of one of their aged brethren, had (as we have intimated) attracted the attention of the magis-

trates, and were destined to furnish, in their painful experience, an illustration of the truth of the text. During the progress of the discourse, two constables entered the room.

"What does this mean?" said the first. "Why hold this unlawful assembly? Is not the meeting-house good enough, nor the doctrines preached there pure enough for ye, that ye must hold a gathering of your own, to the scandal and injury of the place?"

Mr. Clark paused in his discourse. The little audience turned their eyes with surprise and grief upon the disturber.

"Ye have no business here," said the second. "Ye must disperse or take the consequences; and they'll not be pleasant, I tell ye."

"We do not intend, friends," said Mr. Clark, calmly, "to break any good and wholesome laws of the land."

"No parleying," replied the first. "Come, shut up your book, and go with us; we have come to apprehend you."

"Apprehend us!" replied Clark, with astonishment; "we wish to know by whose authority. We should like to see your warrant."

"We come with authority from the magistrates; and as to our warrant, I will read it."

He then drew forth a document, and read as follows:—

"By virtue hereof, you are required to go to the house of William Witter, and so to search from house to house for certain erroneous persons, being strangers, and them to apprehend,

and in safe custody to keep, to-morrow morning, by eight o'clock, to bring before me.

"ROBERT BRIDGES."

During the reading of this precious paper, the hand of the constable trembled, as though he were conscious he was engaged in a bad cause. After he had finished, Mr. Clark said,—

"It is not our intention to resist the authority by which you have come to apprehend us, but yet I perceive you are not so strictly tied, but if you please you may suffer us to make an end of what we have begun; so may you be witnesses either to or against the faith or order which we hold."

"We can do no such thing."

"You may," repeated Clark, "in spite of the warrant, or any thing therein contained."

After as much uncivil disturbance and clamor as the pursuivants of the English bishops, under Laud, indulged in when they arrested the Puritans, and broke up their Conventicles in England, the two constables apprehended the two ministers, Clark and Holmes, with their Brother Crandall, and led them away. There being no jail or other place of confinement in Lynn, the three prisoners were taken *to the alehouse.* It was a deeply affecting scene to old Father Witter to see his beloved pastor and his brethren taken from his own house, prisoners, for no

* In our account of the treatment of the Baptists by the civil government of Massachusetts, we have followed the statements of Clark, Holmes, Backus, and Benedict.

other offence than worshipping God according to the dictates of their own consciences. A recollection of the fact that they had visited him (and had thus been caught in the snare) by his own invitation, added to his sorrow. As the three prisoners left the house, the pastor said to the venerable man,—

"The hour of temptation and trial has come, but let us keep the word of his patience, and He will sustain us in the time of trouble."

At the tavern, whilst at dinner, one of the constables said,—

"Gentlemen, if you be free, I will take you to the meeting." To which they replied,—

"Friend, had we been free thereunto we had prevented all this. Nevertheless, we are in thy hand, and if thou wilt carry us to meeting, thither will we go."

"Then I will carry you to the meeting." To which the prisoners replied,—

"If thou forcest us into your assembly, then shall we be constrained to declare ourselves that we cannot hold communion with them."

"That is nothing," said the constable, "I have not power to command you to speak when you come there, or to be silent."

Seeing the determination of the officers to take them to the meeting of those whose principles and practices they disapproved, Mr. Clark repeated the course of conduct which they should feel themselves compelled to pursue.

"Since we have heard the word of salvation by Jesus Christ, we have been taught, as those

that first trusted in Christ, to be obedient unto him, both by word and deed; wherefore, if we be *forced to your* meeting, we shall declare our dissent from you, both by word and gesture."*

From this frank disclosure, the magistrates knew what to expect. They saw that if they took these strangers to meeting, it must be by compulsion. The prisoners would not go willingly to a meeting of those from whose principles of state-and-church government they so widely differed; they saw, moreover, that if they compelled them to go, a disturbance would be the consequence. The prisoners forwarned them that they should feel constrained, from a sense of duty, to express publicly their dissent, and the constables knew that this would at once kindle a conflagration. For a moment they hesitated; but after consultation with the tavern-keeper, they decided to take them.

The three men, whose own worship had been broken up, were now taken, without their consent, to the meeting of the *standing order*. The congregation were at prayers when they arrived. As they stepped over the threshhold they raised their hats, and civilly saluted them. A seat was then assigned them, which they occupied. After

* It will be seen from the above, what our history everywhere shows, that Baptists, so far from affiliating with Pedobaptists, uniting with them in holding meetings, and inviting their ministers into their pulpits to take part in the services or to preach for them to their people, they looked upon it as wrong to seem to encourage them so much as to attend upon their ministry, since they would seem to be winking at their errors, and bidding them God speed. How different the practice of Baptists of this day. They were inconsistent or we are.

they had taken their seat, they put on their hats. Mr. Clark opened his book, and commenced reading to himself. Mr. Bridges, who had made out the warrant for their apprehension, seeing them sitting with their heads covered, became excited, and ordered the constable to remove their hats from their heads, who at once obeyed, but not in the most amiable manner.

After the prayers, singing, and preaching were over, to which the prisoners listened without offering the least interruption, Mr. Clark rose, and, in a respectful manner, said,—

"I desire, as a stranger, to propose a few things to this congregation, hoping, in the proposal thereof, I shall commend myself to your consciences, to be guided by that wisdom that is from above, which, being pure, is also peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated." He paused, expecting, as he subsequently said. that if the Prince of Peace had been among them, he would have received from a peaceable answer. But the pastor, probably fearing that some difficult questions might be asked, and a troublesome theological controversy ensue, replied,—

"We will have no objections against the sermon."

"I am not about to present objections to the sermon," answered Mr. Clark, "but as, by my gesture at my coming into your assembly, I declared my dissent from you, so, lest that should prove offensive unto some whom I would not offend, I would now, by word of mouth, declare the grounds, which are these: First—from the

consideration we are strangers, each to other, and so strangers to each other's inward standing with respect to God, and so cannot conjoin, and act in faith, and what is not of faith is sin; annd in the second place, I could not judge that you are gathered together and walk according to the visible order of our Lord ——"

"Have done!" cried Mr. Bridges, with the authority of a magistrate. "You have spoken that for which you must answer. I command silence."

After the meeting, the trio of prisoners were taken back to the tavern, where they were as vigilantly watched during the night as though they had been guilty of robbery.

The next morning they were taken by the constables before Mr. Bridges, who made out their mittimus, and sent them to the prison at Boston, there to remain until the next County Court.

This mittimus charged them with "being at a private meeting in Lynn on the Lord's day, exercising among themselves—offensively disturbing the peace of the congregation at the time of their coming into the public meeting in the time of prayer in the afternoon, with saying and manifesting that the Church in Lynn was not constituted according to the order of our Lord, with *suspicion* of having their hands in rebaptizing one or more, among them, and with refusing to put in sufficient security to appear at the County Court."

In addition to these charges, it was alleged against Mr. Clark that he met again the next

day after his contempt, as they called it, of their public worship, at the house of Witter, and in contempt of authority, being then in the custody of the law, did there administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to one excommunicated person, to another under admonition, and to a third that was an inhabitant of Lynn, and not in fellowship with any Church; and yet, upon answer in open court, did affirm that he never rebaptized any.

They were all three found guilty. Mr. Clark, the pastor, was fined twenty pounds, equivalent to about eighty dollars, or to be well whipped. He desired to know by what law of God or man he was condemned. The governor, who did not deem it beneath his dignity to be present on this important occasion, stepped up, and, with much earnestness said to Mr. Clark, "You have denied infant baptism. *You deserve death.* I will not have such trash brought into my jurisdiction. You go up and down, and secretly insinuate unto those that are weak, but you cannot maintain it before our ministers. *You may try and dispute with them.*" To this violent harangue of the chief magistrate of the colony Mr. Clark would have replied at length, but the governor commanded the jailor to take the prisoners away. They were accordingly all three remanded to prison.

CHAPTER XIV.

A CHALLENGE.

DURING his confinement that night Mr. Clark thought much of the insinuations which had been thrown out against him by the governor the day before, and especially of the challenge which had been given him to discuss the question of baptism. It seemed to him as if the great Head of the Church had placed him in that position that there he might be a defender of the truth. He looked upon it as a most favorable opportunity to remove the various aspersions which had been unjustly cast upon the Baptists, and show that in doctrine and practice they were true Christian men. By speaking in behalf of his brethren, it appeared to him that he might possibly be the instrument of removing the unjust disabilities to which they were subject, but especially that he might by presenting the arguments for their peculiar belief, and their objections to infant sprinkling, be the means of opening the eyes of others, and convincing them of the truth. Yet when he thought of his own inability to do full justice to the subject, and of the disadvantages under which he would labor in having the ministry of the stand-

ing order, and the government arrayed against him, his heart sunk within him. "But will not the Saviour be with me? Have I not faith to believe that, according to his own promise, it will be given me in that same hour which I ought to speak?" The taunting permit of the governor, "You may try and dispute with the ministers," was constantly ringing in his ears. He offered earnest prayer for direction and assistance, and finally resolved that, by the grace of God, he would accept the governor's challenge. He did not, as a Christian minister, dare to refuse.

Accordingly, the next morning he addressed a document to the court which had condemned him, accepting the governor's proffer of a public discussion of the points at issue between the Congregationalists and the Baptists, and asking the appointment of a time and place for the occasion. This threw the court into a peculiar position. A prisoner, who had been condemned and sentenced mainly for his religious views and practices, but to whom the governor had thrown down the gauntlet for a discussion, had accepted the challenge. For the court to refuse its sanction would be a tacit rebuke to the governor, and a silent admission of the weakness, or their fear of the weakness of their cause.

After much ado, therefore, Mr. Clark was informed by one of the magistrates that the disputation was granted, and the time fixed for it was the next week. When this became known to the ministers of the colony, it created great

excitement among them. They disapproved the arrangement. They had no wish to enter upon the discussion; they desired to have it abandoned. They therefore saw the magistrates, and earnestly besought them to avoid it; but it seemed too late. They had gone too far to make an honorable retreat. But finding the ministers so averse to a disputation, the magistrates had Mr. Clark brought into their chamber, and there endeavored to change the issues between him and them. They inquired whether he would dispute upon the things contained in his sentence, and maintain his practice; "for," said they, "the court sentenced you not for your judgment and conscience, but for matter of fact and practice." But Mr. Clark was not to be misled by any partial or erroneous statements of the matter; neither was he willing that such statements should go unrebutted. He therefore manfully replied to these magistrates,—

"You say the court condemned me for matter of fact and practice; be it so. I say the matter of fact and practice was but the manifestation of my judgment and conscience, and I maintain that that man is void of judgment and conscience who hath not a fact and practice which correspond therewith." He then continued, "If the faith and order which I profess is according to the word of God, then the faith and order which you profess must fall to the ground; but if your views of truth and duty are scriptural mine must be erroneous. We cannot both be right." To these statements the magistrates apparently assented.

Although Mr. Clark had been informed that the disputation had been granted, and the time appointed, yet it was all *informal* and unofficial. He desired to obtain an official permit, or order, for the discussion, under the secretary's hand. He would then, he felt, be protected; otherwise, the debate might be referred to as evidence of his being a disturber of the state, and a troubler in Israel. He therefore availed himself of the opportunity which was furnished by this private interview with the magistrates, to say to them that if they would be pleased to grant the motion for the public disputation *under the secretary's hand*, he would draw up three or four propositions, embracing the points which he presented in his defence before the court, and would defend them against any one whom they might choose to dispute with him, until, by arguments derived from the word of God, he should be removed from them.

"In case your speaker convinces me that I am in error," said Mr. Clark, following up the subject so as to reach some definite practical point, "then the disputation is at an end; but if not, then I desire the like liberty, by the word of God to oppose the faith and order which he and you profess, thereby to try whether I may not become an instrument in the hand of God to remove you from the same."

To this the magistrates replied,—

"The motion certainly is fair, and your terms like unto a practiced disputant; but, as the matter in dispute is exceeding weighty, and as we desire that in the controversy all may be said

that can be, we propose, therefore, to postpone it to a later day."

Poor Clark was therefore taken back to prison, to wait for the arrival of this "later day."

CHAPTER XV.

IMPORTANT CORRESPODENCE.

THE day following the preparation of this address to the Governor and General Court, in which he offered to come from Newport and discuss the question of baptism, provided they would appoint a time and place, was Commencement day at Cambridge. The governor, council, ministers, and leading citizens of Boston were there in attendance upon the exercises. The aspects of the place were very different then from their present appearance. Where now are commodious and elegant edifices for the accommodation of the students, for the library, chapel, dining hall, and lodging rooms—where beautiful streets are laid out, with elegant residences bordering either side, then stood, in impenetrable grandeur, the primeval forest, or lands and swamps covered with thick shrubbery, elegantly festooned with various native vines, and ornamented with a great profusion of fragrant, wild, nameless flowers. Those sturdy Puritans could

not have dreamed that within the brief limits of two centuries such wonderful changes could transpire as have taken place—that in that retired jungle a city would spring into existence, surrounded by a group of sister cities, with numerous school houses, churches, public buildings, and myriads of inhabitants. Much less could they have imagined the political and national changes which have occurred, by which the two feeble colonies of New England and Virginia have grown into a sisterhood of thirty-one independent states, yet bound together in one beautiful, harmonious whole, and constituting one of the largest and most powerful nations upon earth.

During the progress of the exercises at Cambridge on that day, a man was wandering along the shore on the Boston side of Charles River. He was anxious to cross, but unfortunately all the spare boats that belonged to the citizens of the little town were on the Cambridge side, having been used in conveying visitors to the college. Finally, an Indian, who had been out fishing in the harbor all the morning, came, on his way home, sufficiently near the shore to be hailed. The man called to him, and by signs engaged him to paddle him across the stream in his birchen canoe. Having arrived on the other side, the passenger hastened to the college, and placed in the hand of one of the magistrates a letter; it was the offer of Clark to come from Newport, and engage in the much-talked of discussion. It was not a welcome document. The

advocates of infant sprinkling did not wish to meet Mr. Clark in an oral argument. They knew that that rite was safe so long as it was protected by the sword of state, but they could not forsee what results would grow out of a public disputation. Still, as the governor had been the first to propose such a disputation. and the magistrates had assured Mr. Clark it would be granted, they were in a dilemma what course to pursue so as to avoid the discussion without a compromise of character, or without a tacit implication of the weakness of their own side. The ministers and magistrates conversed upon the subject after the reception of Clark's letter at Cambridge with great interest. The object of the consultation was, to devise some way to extricate themselves from their position without yielding any advantage to the Baptists.

Finally the minister of Boston, Mr. Cotton, who was more strongly opposed to the public controversy than some of the others, drew up a reply to send back, in which he stated that Mr. Clark had misunderstood the governor, who had not enjoined or counselled a public disputation, but had simply expressed the opinion that if Mr. Clark would confer with the ministers upon the subject of infant baptism, they would satisfy him of the propriety of the practice, and he would not be able to maintain his own views before them; that this was intended for Clark's information privately, but by no means as a challenge to dispute publicly on the subject. "Nevertheless," continued this ingenious divine.

"if you are forward to dispute, and that you will move it yourself to the court or magistrates about Boston, we shall take order to appoint one who will be ready to answer motion, you keeping close to the questions to be propounded by yourself; and a moderator shall be appointed, also, to attend upon that service; and whereas you desire you might be free in your dispute, keeping close to the points to be disputed on, without incurring damage by the civil justice, observing what hath before been written, it is granted. The day may be agreed if you yield the premises."

This was signed by the governor, Mr. Endicott, the deputy governor, Mr. Dudley, and three others. Mr. Clark regarded it as a singular document, and understood its practical bearing. He viewed it as an attempt to change the entire ground of procedure, and shelter the governor from the charge of having proposed the discussion. In the expression of a willingness to grant the discussion, provided Clark would move it himself to the court or magistrates about Boston, he discovered an attempt to throw the whole responsibity of the disputation upon himself, and to make it appear to result from his "forwardness to dispute."

Two other remarkable features connected with this affair, which increased the cautiousness of Clark's movements, were—first, that whilst this letter of Cotton's was signed by five colonial dignitaries, it was not an order of court; it was an official document. It was signed by them in

their private capacity, and had not the signature of the secretary. Mr. Clark therefore did not regard it as a reliable state paper.

The other remarkable circumstance was, that this attempt to throw the whole responsibility of originating the discussion of infant baptism upon Clark was made, when they knew that there was a law of the colony which ordered that "if any person or persons shall openly condemn or oppose the baptizing of infants, and shall appear to the court wilfully and obstinately to continue therein, after due time and means of conviction, every such person or persons shall be sentenced to banishment.

Clark knew that their unofficial document would afford him no legal protection, and that in case the disputation went on in the manner they proposed, it would be an easy thing for some one to enter a complaint against him, and secure his conviction. He therefore wrote the following frank and manly epistle, and forwarded it to them:—

To the honored Governor of the Massachusetts and the rest of that honorable society, these present.

WORTHY SENATORS:

I received a writing, subscribed with five of your hands, by way of answer to a twice repeated motion of mine before you, which was grounded, as I conceive, sufficiently upon the governor's words in open court, which writing of yours doth no way answer my expectation, nor yet that

motion which I made; and whereas (waiving that grounded motion) you are pleased to intimate that *if I were* forward to *dispute*, and would move it myself to the court or magistrates about Boston, you would appoint one to answer my motion, &c.,—be pleased to understand that, although I am not backward to maintain the faith and order of my Lord, the King of saints, for which I have been sentenced, yet I am not in such a way so forward to dispute, or move therein, lest inconvenience should thereby arise. I shall rather once more repeat my former motion, which if it shall please the honored General Court to accept, and under their secretary's hand shall grant a free dispute, without molestation or interruption, I shall be well satisfied therewith; that which is past I shall forget, and upon your motion shall attend it; thus desiring the Father of mercies not to lay that evil to your charge, I remain your well-wisher,

JOHN CLARK.

To this fair and honorable proposal of Mr. Clark, the governor and magistrates to whom it was addressed thought it the wisest policy to return no answer. The matter was accordingly dropped by their silent retreat. Thus ended the unfortunate challenge of the governor and the persecution of the pastor of the Newport Baptist Church.

Mr. Bates and Stephen, who had from the first deeply sympathized with Clark, were greatly rejoiced when the affair had reached its end.

CHAPTER XVI.

INWARD LIFE.

IT is time that we inquire into the fate of Mr. Clark's companions. Mr. Crandall, who was sentenced to a fine of five pounds for being one of the company, was released upon promising that he would appear at their next court. But they did not let him know when the next court would sit until it was over; and as he was not present according to his promise, they obliged the keeper to pay his fine.

With poor Holmes it fared far worse than with either of the others. He had been sentenced to pay a fine of thirty pounds, by the first day of the next court, or else to be *well whipped*, and to remain in prison until he provided sureties for the fine. Sureties he would not furnish, because he was determined not to pay the fine. Consequently he was kept in prison. At the time of his trial before the Court of Assistants, when the above cruel sentence was passed against him, he replied,—

"I bless God I am counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus;" at which one of the ministers (Mr. John Wilson) so far forgot the sacredness of his office, and the sanctity of the

place, as to raise his hand, and strike him in open court, at the same time saying, "The curse of God go with thee."*

During the continuance of the imprisonment of Clark and Crandall, Holmes enjoyed their company. This was a source of unspeakable comfort. The conversation, the sympathy, and the prayers of his fellow-prisoners assisted to banish the despondency and gloom which would otherwise have oppressed him. But after their deliverance, and when he was left alone, he was greatly distressed in spirit. In his own account of it, he said, "After I was deprived of my two loving friends, the adversary stepped in, took hold of my spirit, and troubled me for the space of an hour, and then the Lord came in, and sweetly relieved me, causing me look to himself; so was I stayed and refreshed in the thoughts of my God."

As friends had paid the fines of the other two prisoners, and had secured their release, it seemed a hard case that he should be left to feel the scourge. Brethren who sympathized with him resolved that he should not. Strongfaith Bates, Stephen, the brother of the mill, and a few others, raised, by a contribution among themselves, enough to pay his fine. But Holmes would not permit it. In reply to their kind offer, he said,—

"I dare not accept of deliverance in such a way. And though I greatly thank you for your

* Holmes's Letter, in Backus and Benedict.

kindness, and would acknowledge, with gratitude, even a cup of cold water, yet I desire not that you should yield to the unrighteous demands of my persecutors. Having committed no crime, I will not permit my friends to pay a single farthing for me."

The first day of court was drawing near, when, if the fine was not paid, the substitute would be exacted, in stripes, and groans, and blood.

Though Holmes was strongly convinced of the truth of Baptist sentiments, for which he was imprisoned, and was conscientiously opposed to the payment of the fine, or to the doing of any thing else voluntarily, as a penal requisition, yet he was nowise ambitious of the honors of the whipping-post. He shrunk with dread from the sufferings of the scourge. He knew that, when the Court of Assistants sentenced one to be "well whipped," it meant something, and would be executed to the very letter. Yet the night preceding the infliction of the sentence he passed in sweet, refreshing sleep. In the morning, notwithstanding they knew that they would provoke the wrath of "the powers that be," Strongfaith and Stephen, with several other friends, called at the prison, to comfort and encourage the *criminal!* After appropriate religious conversation and prayer, that God would give strength to suffer, and especially that he would open the eyes of the persecutors, to see and love the truth, Strongfaith took from a basket, in which he had stowed a variety of comforts for the poor prisoner, a bottle of old Madeira wine. Pouring out some in a glass, he offered it to Holmes.

"No, brother. I thank you for your kindness but I shall take no strong drink until my punishment is over, lest, if I have more strength, courage, and boldness than ordinarily could be expected, the world should say that I was drunk, or that I was carried through by the strength and comfort of what I had taken. No; let me so suffer, that, if I am sustained, God shall have the glory."

Still, the prisoner was by no means certain that he would not shrink, faint, or show signs of physical cowardice, though he thus spake. Instead, however, of strengthening himself with wine and other luxuries, which had been brought, he left his friends to be entertained with each other, whilst he withdrew into another room, to hold communion with his Lord. So soon as he had retired by himself, he was overwhelmed with the deepest gloom. He was tempted to question his own sincerity and the purity of his motives. A something within, which he attributed to Satanic agency, said, "Remember thyself, thy birth, thy breeding, thy friends, thy wife, children, name, credit. Thou art dishonoring all these by thy public scourging. Is this necessary, when others are ready to save thee from suffering, and thy friends from disgrace?" His heart sank with him. The idea of dishonoring any who were dear to him was more painful than the anticipated punishment; but presently the thought occurred to him, or as he afterwards expressed it, "There came in sweetly, from the Lord, as sudden an answer: ''Tis

for my Lord; I must not deny him before the sons of men, (for that were to set men above him,) but rather lose all; yea, wife, children, and mine own life also.'" This, however, did not afford him permanent peace; for soon a series of questions rushed into his mind, creating confusion of thought, and reviving his disquietude of feeling. "Is it for the Lord that you are about to sufier? Have you his glory alone in view? Is it not rather for your own or some other's sake? Is it not obstinacy or pride? Is it not resentment or bigotry? Is not selfishness at the bottom?"

These unwelcome, and, as they seemed to him, involuntary queries increased his distress; but after a jealous and careful scrutiny of his motives, he was convinced, as he said, that, "It was not for any man's cause or sake in this world, that so I had professed and practiced, but for my Lord's cause and sake, and for him alone; whereupon my spirit was much refreshed."

He was also greatly comforted by the following passages of Scripture, which were sweetly suggested to his mind: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" "Although I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." "And he that continueth to the end shall be saved." But anon, the thoughts of the terrible scourge occurred to him, and he feared that the severity of the dreadful punishment would be too much for his sensitive flesh. The disgrace of the pun-

ishment he regarded not. That belonged to others, and not to himself. Like his Lord and Master, he despised the shame. But the anticipated pain of the heavy blows make him shrink. He knew his weakness and sensitiveness, and feared that he would be overcome. Again he betook himself to the throne ot grace. He prayed earnestly that the Lord would be pleased to give him a spirit of courage and boldness, a tongue to speak for him, and strength of body to suffer for his sake, and not to shrink from the strokes, nor shed tears, lest the adversaries of the truth should blaspheme, and be hardened, and the weak and feeble-hearted be discouraged. His prayer was followed with fresh consolation and strength. It produced a state of trustful submission to God, causing him to yield himself, soul and body, into the hands of his Saviour, and leave the whole disposing of the affair with him.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN AFFECTING SCENE.

WHEN the time arrived for the condemned Baptist preacher to be led forth to punishment, and the voice of the jailor was heard in the prison, Holmes listened to it with a degree of cheerfulness. Taking his Testament in his hand, he went forth with him to the place of execution. As he approached the whipping-post, around which were gathered a crowd of spectators, he calmly saluted them. Two of the magistrates were present to see that the whipper did his duty—Mr. Increase Nowel who had signed his sentence, and Mr. Flint. After waiting some minutes in expectation of the governor's coming, Nowel commanded the executioner to do his office.

"Permit me," said Holmes, as the executioner seized him, "to say a few words."

"Now is no time to speak," replied Nowel. But Holmes was unwilling to suffer in silence. He desired to declare to the multitude the grounds of his belief, and the reasons of his punishment. He therefore lifted up his voice and said,—

"Men, brothers, fathers, and countrymen, I beseech you give me leave to speak a few words, and the rather because here are many spectators to see me punished, and I am to seal with my blood, if God give strength, that which I hold and practice in reference to the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus. That which I have to say, in brief, is this: although I am no disputant, yet seeing I am to seal with my blood what I hold, I am ready to defend by the word, and to dispute that point with any that shall come forth to withstand it."

Magistrate Nowel told him, "Now is no time to dispute."

"Then," continued Holmes, "I desire to give an account of the faith and order I hold." This he uttered three times. But Magistrate Flint cried out to the executioner, "Fellow, do thine office, for this fellow would but make a long speech to delude the people."

In compliance with this authoritative mandate, the executioner roughly seized Holmes, and began to strip off his clothes. The sentence was to be inflicted upon the prisoner, not upon his garments. But Holmes was determined to speak if possible. Whilst therefore the whipper was removing his clothes and preparing him for the lash, he said to the people,—

"That which I am to suffer for is the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ."

"No," replied Magistrate Nowel, "it is for your error, and going about to seduce the people."

"Not for my error," said Holmes, "for in all the time of my imprisonment, wherein I was left alone, (my brethren being gone,) which of all your ministers in all that time came to convince me of an error? and when, upon the governor's words, a motion was made for a public dispute, and upon fair terms so often renewed, and desired by hundreds, what was the reason it was not granted?"

This was a close and significant question. As all the multitude knew that a public disputation had been anticipated, but had not yet taken place, the inquiry of Holmes seemed to demand an answer. Nowel therefore replied,—

"It was the fault of him who went away and would not dispute," referring to Clark. But this, as we have already shown, was not the case.

Flint became impatient at this colloquy, and repeated his order to the executioner,—

"Fellow, do thine office." Holmes, however, would not remain silent. Whilst being disrobed, he said,—

"I would not give my body into your hands to be thus bruised on any other account whatever; yet now I would not give the hundreth part of a wampum-peague* to free it out of your hands."

"Unbutton here," said the executioner, as he gave his jacket a jerk.

"No," said Holmes; "I make as much con-

* The sixth part of a penny.

science of unbuttoning one button as I do of paying the sentence of thirty pounds. I will do nothing towards executing such an unjust law."

Faithful to his word, he would not voluntarily assist the executioner in the least in removing his garments from his back.

He was as helpless as if he were asleep, and the executioner had to handle him as though he were a statue. Still he continued addressing the people.

"The Lord," said he, "having manifested his love towards me, in giving me repentance towards God and faith in Christ, and so to be baptized in water by a messenger of Jesus, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, wherein I have fellowship with him in his death, burial, and resurrection, I am now come to be baptized in afflictions by your hands, that so I may have further fellowship with my Lord, and am not ashamed of his sufferings, for by his stripes am I healed."

The executioner, having removed so much of his garments as would hinder the effect of the scourge, and having fastened him to the post, seized a three-corded whip, raised his hands, and laid on the blows in an unmerciful manner. Stroke followed stroke as rapidly as was consistent with effective execution, each blow leaving its crimson furrow, or its long blue wale in the sufferer's quivering flesh. The only pause which occurred during the infliction of this barbarous punishment was when the executioner ceased a moment in order to spit in his hands, so as to

take a firmer hold of the handle of the whip, and render the strokes more severe. This he did three times. During the infliction of his painful scourging, Holmes said to the people,—

"Though my flesh and my spirit fail, yet God will not fail." The poor sufferer did not fail. He found that his strength was equal to his day. Though the lash was doing its bloody work upon his sensitive flesh, yet his spirit was sustained by heavenly consolations. In his own account of his experience during this dreadful ordeal, Holmes subsequently said,—

"It pleased the Lord to come in and fill my heart and tongue as a vessel full, and with an audible voice I brake forth, praying the Lord not to lay this sin to their charge, and telling the people that now I found he did not fail me, and therefore now I should trust him for ever who failed me not; for in truth, as the strokes fell upon me, I had such a spiritual manifestation of God's presence as I never had before, and the outward pain was so removed from me that I could well bear it, yea, and in a manner felt it not, although it was grievous, as the spectators said; the man striking with all his strength, spitting in his hand three times, with a three-corded whip, giving me therewith thirty strokes."

After the requisite number of blows had been given, equalling the number of pounds that he was fined, (from which we learn that, according to the Puritan standard of penal measure, one blow of a three-corded whip, well laid on, was an equivalent to one pound sterling,) the cords

which fastened him to the whipping-post were untied, and he was set at liberty. With joyfulness in his heart and cheerfulness in his countenance, he turned to the magistrates Flint and Nowel, and said,—

"You have struck me as with roses." But not wishing to imagine that he regarded the punishment as literally light, nor that he was sustained by his own strength, he added,—

"Although the Lord hath made it easy to me, yet I pray God it may not be laid to your charge."

The crowd now gathered around him, some from mere curiosity, others inwardly rejoicing that the heretic had been scourged, whilst a third class were filled with mingled emotions of sympathy with his sorrows, and indignation at his wrongs.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EFFECTS OF PERSECUTION.

AMONGST those whose feelings of sympathy and indignation were aroused at the barbarous treatment of Holmes, were two individuals who were so rejoiced that the sufferer had been sustained under his cruelties, and that he left the ignominious post with so much composure, and even with pleasantness of countenance, that they shook hands with him; and one of them, whose name was John Spur, a freeman of the colony, said to him, "Blessed be God for thee, my brother," and walked along with him to the prison. The other, who simply shook hands with him, was another freeman, Mr. John Hazel. Many others testified their friendship for him, and glorified God on his account. To some, however, who were present, these expressions of sympathy were extremely displeasing. They looked upon it as a connivance at the crime, and a contempt of the government. As informers, they immediately made complaint of what they had witnessed, and a number of warrants were issued for the apprehension of these sympathizing offenders.

When Holmes reached the prison, his body

was found to be in a terrible condition—his body, not simply his back, for the lashes of the whip were so long that they lapped over his back, and left their gory marks upon his side.

Eaton, who had been a spectator of all the proceedings, ran home immediately after the whipping, obtained some rags and oil, and hastened to the prison, where, like the good Samaritan, he dressed the wounded man's sores. When it was known that Holmes had received such kindness, the inquiry became general, who was the surgeon? And the report was soon circulated that he was to be arrested.

So severe was the chastisement of the prisoner that for many days he could not endure the pain occasioned by the wounded parts of his body touching the bed. All the rest that he experienced was such as he obtained by supporting himself upon his knees and elbows.

The day after the whipping, whilst Spur and Hazel were attending to their business, they were surprised by a constable calling upon them, and telling them they were prisoners. As his authority, he showed them the following document:

"*To the keeper or his deputy:*

"By virtue hereof, you are to take into your custody and safe keeping the body of John Spur, for a heinous offence by him committed; hereof fail not. Dated the 7th of the 7th month, 1651. Take also into your safe keeping John Hazel.

"By the court, "INCREASE NOWEL."

They were accordingly both taken to prison, the *heinous offence* consisting of the act of shaking hands and speaking with Holmes after his punishment, and, consequently, after he had satisfied the law, and was no longer an involuntary prisoner.

They were afterwards taken to the court and examined. They had no trial, neither were they allowed to meet their complaints face to face, but were condemned upon the evidence furnished by the depositions of two individuals; the stronger of the two documents being as follows:

"I, —— Cole, being in the market-place when Obadiah Holmes came from the whipping-post, John Spur came and met him presently, laughing in his face, saying, 'Blessed be God for thee, brother;' and so did go with him, laughing upon him, towards the prison, which was very grievous to me to see him harden the man in his sin, and showing much contempt of authority by that carriage, as if he had been unjustly punished, and had suffered as a righteous man under a tyrannical government. Deposed before the court the 5th of the 7th month.

"INCREASE NOWEL."

They were sentenced to receive ten lashes each, or pay a fine of forty shillings. The latter they could not conscientiously do. A Mr. Bendal, who was a friend to Hazel, offered to pay his, but he refused, saying,—

"I thank you for this offer of love; but I believe it will be no acceptable service for any man to pay a penny for me in this case." Yet, notwithstanding his refusal, the court accepted the proffer, and gave him his discharge. Hazel was upwards of sixty years of age, and died soon after his release.*

Spur was kept in prison nearly a week, expecting every day to be taken to the market-square, tied to the whipping-post, and receive his ten lashes; but, without his permission some sympathizing friend paid his fine and secured his deliverance.

These persecutions were the means of attracting the attention of many to the doctrines of the sufferers. Sympathy elicited inquiry, and inquiry produced conviction. The sentiments of the Baptists spread. Many were convinced of the scripturalness of their views of Baptism, and desired to be buried with Christ in that beautiful and significant ordinance. Their desire could not be refused. The ordinance was administered repeatedly, though with the greatest privacy, for fear of prisons, fines, and scourges, and the Newport Church received valuable additions to her strength through these.

---

* Benedict's History of the Baptists.

CHAPTER XIX.

IMPORTANT MOVEMENT.

THE treatment which the persecuted Baptists had received from the government of Massachusetts produced a decided effect upon Strong-faith and Stephen. It brought them to a decision. After repeated conferences with each other upon the subject, they resolved to apply to Mr. Holmes for baptism before he returned home to Newport. After, therefore, he had sufficiently recovered from the effects of his whipping, these two candidates visited him, and presented their request for the ordinance.

"I must first know," said he, "what evidence there is that you are the disciples of Christ. I find, from the New Testament, that only those were baptized who had repented of their sins, and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. I have no authority to administer the ordinance to any other."

The two candidates then related to Mr. Holmes their Christian experience, and their views of religious truth and of gospel ordinances. Believing them to be proper subjects for baptism, he agreed to administer the ordinance to them the next Lord's day.

As quite a number of individuals, convinced of Baptist sentiments, and others known to be dissatisfied with infant sprinkling, who were investigating the subject, were then in Boston, information of the anticipated baptism was privately circulated amongst them.

In respect of Mr. Bates, the step he was about to take was one of great importance, and, as he foresaw, would involve consequences of a disagreeable kind. He was a member of the Congregational Church. By voluntarily coming out from them, he was condemning, in a most decided manner, their practice. He was separating himself from many whom he tenderly and strongly loved. He knew that his case would be taken up in Church meeting—that it would not be strange if his motives should be impugned, and his character aspersed. Public excommunication would be unavoidable, and perhaps, also, a trial before the court of Assistants. But he had made up his mind to relinquish all, and suffer all for the truth's sake. An important principle was at stake, and he was determined that it should not be compromised from any personal consideration whatever.

With Stephen the case was widely different. He had united with no Church. His act, therefore, would not subject him to ecclesiastical discipline, though it would necessarily prevent him from becoming a freeman in the colony, as that was the exclusive privilege of the members of the Congregational Church. His position in

the community would be far from pleasant, and would probably subject him to the necessity of a removal to some other place. Besides, he had every reason for believing that when his parents heard of his course, they would be exceedingly displeased, and perhaps would write for him to return home. Still he resolved to go forward, leaving the consequences with Him whose law he was obeying.

CHAPTER XX.

A DISCUSSION.

THE Sabbath came. It was a beautiful, warm, clear day. The place selected for the occasion was a small cove on the west side of the neck that united Boston to Roxbury. No houses were in the vicinity, and they had no reason to fear an interruption. Very early in the morning, individuals, singly and in couples, began to approach the place. Presently Mr. Holmes came, and soon after, Strongfaith and Stephen. The little assembly rapidly increased. It was much larger than had been expected. As Mr. Bates looked round upon them, he saw a number whom he knew were strongly opposed to Baptist sentiments. He whispered the fact to Mr. Holmes.

"No matter," said he. "He who is for us is more than all they who are against us."

"If we are brought before the court, there will be plenty of witnesses against us."

"The more important it is for us to observe apostolic order in our service," replied Holmes.

When the appointed hour arrived, a hymn was sung, after which Mr. Holmes addressed the company, presenting the various scriptural reasons for administering the ordinance by immersion, and to believers only. It was his previous intention to have said not a word; but knowing that a number were present who had never seen the ordinance before, and who were ignorant of the reasons of Baptist sentiments, he considered it his duty to express the grounds of their belief. Having done so, he urged them to search the Scriptures for themselves.*

"The Bible," said he, "is a plain book, and written for the benefit of plain people. All its fundamental truths we may all discover if we only search it with a humble, teachable spirit. Receive not the sentiments you have now heard simply upon my declaration, but search the Scrip-

* I do think if there is ever a time when a minister of Christ cannot without sin fail to explain the dogma of baptism to the people, and above all to the candidates, it is at the fount or waters side. It is a question worthy of consideration, if a person is baptized according to the intention of Christ, unless that person understands the design of his baptism. If valid baptism involves a *profession of faith*, must not the subject understand *what he professes?* If he is to prefigure or represent certain facts in his baptism, ought he not to know what these facts are? Can he be baptized intelligibly without a proper understanding of these things? What is the difference in this respect, at least between an unconscious adult and an unconscious infant?

tures for yourselves, and see if you can find any command to baptize infants, or any instance of the baptism of such; see if the circumstances which are narrated in each case of baptism do not either express or imply penitence and faith in the candidate."

"Whole households were baptized," said one in the company of spectators; "were there no infants amongst them?"

"We do not read of any," calmly replied Holmes. "You who believe in infant baptism are bound to show that there were such; but where the Scriptures are so utterly silent upon a point as they are upon that, you will find it difficult to press from them any testimony whatever. Furnish a single clear instance from the Bible of any infant being baptized, and the question is settled in your favor. But this never has been, and never will be done."

"It is not necessary to find such proofs, seeing that baptism has taken the place of circumcision; for, as circumcision was administered to infants, so must baptism be, which is its substitute."

"But where, friend, dost thou find in the New Testament that baptism is a substitute for circumcision? Neither the Saviour nor his apostles ever taught such a doctrine. Circumcision has nothing to do with the gospel or with Gentiles, as we are. It concerns the *Jews*, and *still* concerns the Jews and the Jews only, for it is still in force, because it was an everlasting cove-

nant, and therefore unalterable in its seal or token."

"How do you make that out?" continued the interlocutor, who proved to be Cole, who had given his deposition against John Spur.

"Very easily, friend; and if you will permit me to ask you a few questions, I will show you. Did not God make a covenant with Abaham?"

"Certainly."

"In that covenant there were two parties, both of whom were to do something; these parties were God and Abraham. Now, what did God promise to do, as his part of the covenant? Read the account in the seventeenth of Genesis, and you will see that he promised that he would make Abraham the father of numerous descendants—that nations and kings should spring from him, and that he would give him the fruitful land of Canaan for an *everlasting* possession. Having made these promises, what did he require of the patriarch as his part of the covenant?"

"He required him to have all the males of his family circumcised."

"Very well; now, what was circumcision the sign of?"

"It was the sign, or the token of this covenant."

"That is to say," continued Holmes, "circumcision was the visible sign or evidence that such a covenant had been formed; and it was to be continued upon all the male descendants of Abraham,

and male proselytes, until it was either *changed* or *abrogated*. Will you not admit this?"

"Certainly. I will admit that the Jews, or natural children of Abraham were to be circumcised until the covenant was *changed* or *abrogated*, of course, but the covenant was changed when Christ came, and *baptism* was substituted for circumcision, and therefore the children of believers are now to be baptized as Abraham's children were circumcised."

"But how do you know this, my friend, where is there a syllable in the whole Bible that teaches you so?"

"Know it? why, Parson Cotton has always told us so, and he says that Calvin, the greatest of all men and scholars, says it is certainly so; and we know that neither Parson Cotton nor Calvin would have said so, unless it was so," responded Cole, warmly, "will you presume to know more than such men?"

"But ought we not to found our opinions upon the word of God," replied Holmes, mildly. "Ought we not to regard the plain declarations of the Bible, rather than opinions of the greatest scholars in the world? Now hear me calmly for a moment. You have just admitted that the covenant of circumcision was to remain unchanged in subjects, promises, and ratifying signs, until it was abrogated or changed by a positive enactment—in other words it was to remain unchanged during the period for which it was given. Now, let us examine the account of it," and opening his Bible at Gen. xvii. he read 4–15: "'As for me,

behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and Kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old, shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in thy house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

"This is the covenant of circumcision, and here are enumerated all the subjects, grants, conditions, and the sign or ratifying pledge of it on the day it was made and ratified. Allow me to ask you in the presence of all these assembled, Tell me with whom was this covenant made, and to whom do the promises of it alone belong, but to Abraham and *his* seed after *him*, in *their generations?* Is it not so?"

"I am willing to grant it, for it so."

"That's well said by you; now I will read again the fifth to the ninth verses. Tell me if you will, the promises made to Abraham and his natural children. Are they not these three:

"1. That Abraham should be a father of many nations, and that kings should come out of him?

"2. That Jehovah would be a God to him and his descendants after him, to preserve them, and to fulfil all he had promised?

"3. That God would give to Abraham and his descendants the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.

"Are there any other promise in the covenant save these three?"

"I see no others," said Cole, evidently quieted, and indeed interested in the exposition.

"Are these temporal or spiritual blessings?"

"They are temporal, inasmuch as they relate to temporalities."

"Are they made to any others save to Abraham's *natural descendants* known to us as Jews."

"It don't read otherwise."

"Very well, we are agreed thus far, and should be because God speaks. Now tell me how long this covenant was to last, until Christ should come or for ever? Mark what God says." and Holmes read the eighth, ninth, and thirteenth verses. "'And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant.'"

"It certainly reads 'an *everlasting* covenant,' but I had never read or heard it read so before, and failed to notice it," replied Cole, no little astonished and confused.

"I am not seeking to entrap you, but to empress upon you the teachings of God's word. You need have no doubt about the everlasting duration of this covenant. Mark the language of God when he repeats the covenant to Sarah, in the nineteenth verse: 'And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his seed after him.'

"If any thing more is needed, I refer you to 1 Chron. xvi. 16, 17: '*Even of the Covenant* which he made with Abraham, and of his oath

unto Isaac : And hath confirmed the same tc Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting Covenant.' David also declares the same in the hundred and fifth Psalm, who was inspired to utter the truth: 'He hath remembered his covenant for ever: the word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations. Which *covenant* he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac: And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law; *and* to Israel *for* an everlasting covenant: Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan—the lot of your inheritance: When they were *but* a few men in number; yea very few, and strangers in it.'"

"I think it the part of candor to grant that the covenant is an everlasting one, but I never these passages before."

"Well, if the covenant is an *everlasting* one—it is to the *same persons*—the natural descendants of Abraham—*the Jews*," said Holmes, holding the disputant with his eye, "and therefore the Gentiles, and we and our children being Gentiles never had any interest in it, and never can or will have any interest in it; and, furthermore, if the sign of the covenant is as unchangeable as the covenant, it has never been changed and never will be changed, and therefore nothing can come in the *room* or *place* of either the original subject, or the sign of the covenant of circumcision; and therefore neither Gentiles can ever come in the place of Jews, nor baptism in the place of circumcision."

Cole was as silent as the crowd that listened

to this plain exposition. Holmes continued: "Is it said that this covenant was conditional? The Jews, as a people, have faithfully performed their part of this covenant, whatever sins they have committed, they have circumcised their children. Find the Jew to-day in whatever land of the wide earth, in whatever island of the sea, and he is circumcised, and the seed of Abraham is a distinct race, a people without a land or nation—a living miracle! The covenant stands, and God is bound to fulfil its promises—the land is yet to be theirs, and they are yet to be gathered from among all nations, and planted upon *their* land no more to be pulled up."*

"But," says Cole, "does not Paul say that circumcision was a *seal* of faith."

"Certainly he does. It *was* a seal of faith, but of whose faith, not of the infant children of Abraham, for they had no faith, nor can it, or baptism be a seal of your infant's faith, for they have none. Circumcision *was* the seal, as Paul says, of the righteousness of *Abraham's* faith, and of *his only;* that is, it was the *seal* or *attestatation*, which God gave to Abraham that his faith was a righteous act—that God accepted it. The king gives to one of us, his colonists in New England, a grant of land by charter or letters patent, and to our heirs *for ever*, for faithful services rendered to him—such a grant, secured by his seal, would be to the father a sign and seal of *his* loyalty and faithfulness, and

* See Amos ix. 11, 15.

of the king's favor for him; but it would not be a seal of the loyalty of his children in all generations to come, although they would possess the inheritance."

"But the light of the New Testament is clear upon this subject. If baptism came in the place of circumcision, why did John and Christ, and the apostles baptize those believing Jews who had been circumcised? And above that, why did Paul circumcise Timothy, who had been baptized? And why did the early Christian Jews continue circumcision?

"If these facts will not suffice, I refer you to the settlement of the whole matter by the inspired apostles, and the Church at Jerusalem. The subject was brought up in the Church at Antioch, whether Gentiles should be circumcised, and referred to the apostles for a decision. If baptism had been substituted for circumcision, and Gentile believers and other children for Jews, this was an occasion which demanded the statement of the fact; its statement would have settled the question authoritatively and for ever; and if it had been a fact the apostles could not at this time have omitted to mention it. Here is a history of that matter," said Holmes, reading from his Testament: "'And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When, therefore, Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them,

should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.' That was their specific object; namely, to ask the apostles and elders at Jerusalem whether they ought to impose circumcision upon the Gentiles. Peter and James both delivered addresses on the subject, in which they opposed the idea of the Gentiles having any thing to do with circumcision. Finally, a letter was written to the Church at Antioch, answering their inquiry in the negative. Now, in all that discussion, as narrated in the New Testament, *not a word was said about baptism having come in the place of circumcision: when, if such had been the case, the statement of that fact was the very answer to have been given*, and, without doubt, would have been given. It is altogether improbable that if baptism had supplanted circumcision, the apostles and elders of the Church at Jerusalem would have omitted to state so important a fact on that occasion. The question at issue demanded the statement; the answer would have been defective without it. But as there is not the least reference to such a change, the conclusion is unavoidable that it had not been made. Indeed, nowhere is it said in the New Testament to the Judaizing teachers, who desired to continue circumcision, that that institution must no longer be continued, *because it had given place to baptism.* It is wonderful that there should be no statement or record of such a remarkable change, if it had ever occurred. Entire silence upon the subject, when its statement was so im-

peratively called for, is conclusive evidence against it."

After a few more words between the parties, the conversation ceased.

CHAPTER XXI.

A BEAUTIFUL SERVICE.

THE morning sun was now fairly above the horizon, and was shining in all its strength. The hills and woods were arrayed in drapery of the richest emerald. A few summer flowers timidly showed themselves here and there, as if fearful of attracting attention, lest they too should be persecuted for not *conforming* to the deep green of the *standing order* of trees and plants around them. Not a breath of wind was stirring. The water was an immense mirror, reflecting, with perfect minuteness of detail, every hill, rock, tree, and plant, which fringed its borders. A few Indians, who had been attracted to the spot by this unusual gathering, appeared to be singularly reduplicated—their light and graceful canoes, with their gay occupants, appearing as distinctly, though inverted, beneath the surface as above it. The birds, as if rejoicing at the return of the Sabbath, or as

if glorying in their own freedom of opinion and practice, made the groves vocal with their charming melody—they offered sinless matins to their Creator. Above, the deep azure was relieved by heaps of fleecy clouds, some of snowny whiteness, others of golden hue, which appeared fixed upon the surface of the sky, as if they had been so many solid boulders. After the offering of prayer, appropriate to the specific object and the peculiar circumstances of their assembling, Mr. Holmes took the arm of Mr. Bates, and slowly led him into the transparent stream, at the same time saying:

"We read that when Philip baptized the eunuch, 'they went both of them down into the water, and he baptized him.'"

Having reached a sufficient depth, he paused; then laying his right hand on the candidate's back, and placing the other on his breast, over the crossed hands of Mr. Bates, he said:

"On a profession of thy repentance of sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, I baptize thee, my brother, into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," at the same time gently laying him backwards in the water until he was entirely immersed—the water covering him like a transparent veil. When he arose, the administrator said:

"The Apostle Paul tells us we are 'buried with Christ by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' He speaks of baptism as a

burial, from which also there is a resurrection; and in the ordinance, as you have now seen it administered, were there not both of these—a burial and a resurrection? Again he says, 'For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.' In planting is there not a burial of the seed?

"In his Epistle to the Colossians, 'buried with him in baptism, wherein,' *i. e.*, in which baptism, 'also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.' The burial is in the baptism, in the visible ordinance, and this burial has a twofold reference: first to the death and resurrection of the Saviour, and secondly to the moral transformation of character which has been experienced by the candidate, where there was a death in respect to the reigning power of sin, and a resurrection to a newness of life. How beautifully are all these symbolized by the ordinance as you have now seen it administered! And hence how impressively significant is baptism when properly administered! but how entirely void of all appropriate significance is it when sprinkling is adopted! for in that case how totally diverse is the symbol from the thing symbolized! Where is there any burial in sprinkling, or where is the resurrection?"

After reaching the shore with Mr. Bates, he then took Stephen, saying:

"'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way; even by taking heed thereto accord-

ing to thy word,'" and baptized him in the same manner.

"We have now," said Mr. Holmes, "followed the New Testament examples as closely as was in our power. John baptized Jesus in Jordan; we have baptized in a river; John baptized at Enon, near to Salem, because there was much water there. We have come to this place to administer the ordinance, because there is much water here. When Philip baptized the Ethiopian, they went both of them down into the water, and after the baptism they came up out of the water; we have done the same; and in those primitive baptisms we are informed by the Apostle Paul, in different Epistles, that there was a burial in baptism; in the ordinance as administered on this occasion there was a burial—both of these disciples have been buried in baptism, by which act they acknowledge their dependence upon the death and resurrection of Christ, as the grounds of their Christian hope, and by which also they profess that they have died unto sin, and have arisen to a newness of life. Add to all this, friends, what is generally admitted by learned divines of other denominations, that the original meaning of the word 'baptize' is to immerse; and is not the evidence conclusive, that we have now imitated the example of Christ and his apostles? The baptism of these candidates was the answering of a good conscience towards God. They will now go on their way rejoicing." And then, lifting his hands and raising his eyes towards heaven, he added:

"Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room."

Pausing a moment, and looking around upon the spectators, he continued:

"May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ descend upon you, and lead you all to the knowledge and the acknowledgment of the truth; and to his name shall be the glory for ever. Amen.

"Well, now," said the little, bent, talkative Mrs. Strangger, who was one of the few women present, to another who stood by her side, "well, now, that raaly looks kind o' reasonable, don't it?" But without waiting for any reply, she continued, "I never considered it that light. I don't know as I ever heern a point made plainer. Why, la! if it had been Parson Cotton who had said all that, I should believe every word; for our minister is a learned man. But there, la! I must be careful what I say, or they will have me before the court. I wonder if the poor man's back is healed yet. If it isn't, I should think he'd take cold by going so far into that wet water, and have a dreadful time. I hope, even if he is a heretic, they won't catch and whip him again. It was dreadful to see the poor man lashed so."

"It would not be strange if they did, for here is the honorable Secretary Nowel, who has seen and heard all this morning, and it would not be wonderful, (as he is a great hater of heretics,) if he should have this man arrested again for disturbing the public peace."

This was precisely what Holmes and his friends feared. They saw Nowel there, and, judging from his previous conduct, they thought it improbable that he would allow this to pass with impunity. It was to them a mystery how he and the other Puritans had heard of the administration of the ordinance; for it was thought by those interested, that successful precautions had been adopted to preserve secrecy. The facts in the case were these: Little Abel Eaton slept in a trundle-bed, in the same room with his parents. One night, after he had retired, and the parents supposed him sound asleep, they entered into conversation upon the anticipated baptism of Strongfaith and Stephen.

"When will it take place?" asked the wife.

"Next Sabbath morning, at sunrise," answered Mr. Eaton.

"Where?"

"In the sandy cove, on the west side of the neck, just beyond Philemon Brown's."

This Abel heard. The next day, he called at Mrs. Strangger's, and, in childish thoughtlessness, told her. This was a piece of information too rich, too important for the little curved-back woman to keep to herself.

After getting through with her work, and brushing up her house, away she trudged to some of the more important families of her acquaintance, and communicated the news. From them it circulated to others, and was thus the means of bringing a number of unexpected persons to the baptismal scene. This, however,

operated favorably, as it gave them an opportunity of witnessing the ordinance, which they had never seen before, and was the means of awakening, in the minds of some, a spirit of inquiry upon the subject.

The fears which had been cherished were not groundless. Holmes was earnestly advised to make his escape, as it was rumored that a warrant had been issued for his apprehension, and he could not remain long concealed. No being at all ambitious of the honors of imprisonment, nor in the least degree solicitous to have his wounds re-opened with the three-corded whip, to the gaze of a gaping multitude in the market square, he decided to escape.

"It will be," said his friends, "according to the instruction of the great Head of the Church, who said, 'When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another.'"

Accordingly, on Monday night, so soon as it was sufficiently dark to avoid observatien, he left the house of Mr. Bates, where he had stopped, and started for home. It was well he did so; for on the next day, a constable came to the house with a warrant, and searched the house from top to bottom for "the body of Obadiah Holmes." But it could not be found.

When his friends at Newport and Providence learned that he was on his way home, they went several miles into the woods, to meet him. The greeting was one of tender and affectionate interest. The old forest echoed with the voice of prayer, and with songs of gladness and praise

that God had sustained him under the dreadful severities through which he had passed, and had granted him, at last, deliverance from his persecutors.

CHAPTER XXII.

PRUDENTIAL MOVEMENTS.

AFTER the baptism of the two candidates, Strongfaith and Stephen found their condition far from being pleasant. The former, as he anticipated, was excluded from the Church, and disfranchised as a citizen. Stephen soon learned that many of his former friends were estranged from him. He was looked at askance, and treated coldly. Both knew that their movements were closely observed, and that, if they were guilty of violating the law which prohibited opposition to infant sprinkling, they would be compelled to suffer the penalty. As all meetings of the Baptists were forbidden, they could not assemble with their own brethren, except by stealth; and even then, these secret meetings were always attended with danger. The ministers, the magistrates, and the members of the Church, except those of the latter who were investigating the subject, were strongly opposed to the sentiments of the Baptists, and felt them-

selves bound to do all in their power to prevent the spreading of what they believed to be such dangerous doctrines. All suspected persons were marked, and their course carefully watched. They were constantly subjected to a kind of social quarantine. In respect to sympathy and intercouse, a healthful distance was maintained between them and the standing order—the laws of this social quarantine being regulated by the latter. The practical operation of all this was any thing but agreeable to those who were under the ban. Mr. and Mrs. Eaton, resolved to go where they could breathe freely. Their condition was about as fatal to their happiness as before they left England. Persecution from the established Church in England, because they were Puritans, seemed to them no worse than persecution from the standing order in New England, because they were Baptists. In both cases there was equally a violation of the rights of conscience—a disregard of religious liberty. It was to them a matter of astonishment that, when the Puritans had suffered so severely on account of their religious opinions at home, and when they had expressed such strong condemnation of the cruelties of the episcopal government, that, in the New World, they should adopt similar principles, and pursue a similar course towards those who differed from them. It seemed to the sufferers that, if the persecuting principles of the Puritans were carried out, they would compel them to be as severe upon the Episcopalians, if they should ever come into the

colony, as the latter had ever been upon them Parties only, and not principles, would then be changed.

Believing they could have no peaceful enjoyment of their religious views in Massachusetts, Mr. Eaton and his wife resolved to emigrate to Providence, where Roger Williams tolerated religious opinions of every kind. Their membership was with the Church at Newport, where they worshipped, there being no Baptist Church in the city of Providence. For similar reasons Stephen determined to accompany them. Some days were required for them to get ready. As Mrs. Eaton was unwilling to go by land, her husband was obliged to obtain a boat, store it with water and provisions, and get his furniture and other property on board. In the meantime, the rumor was circulated, that a number of warrants had been issued for the apprehension of others, besides Spur and Hazel, who had expressed kindness and sympathy for my Holmes, after his whipping. As Stephen was one of them, and as he had visited Holmes in prison, and ministered to his wants, and as he had recently been baptized, he, with good reason, supposed that he was one of those for whose "body" the constables were seeking. He therefore changed his mind, and resolved to start off secretly for Providence, by land, rather than, by waiting to go by water, increase the danger of being seized. He kept himself, concealed, therefore, by day; but when the shadows of evening arrived, he left his hiding-place, took a gun and a small pack

containing some food and a few garments, and started over Boston Neck towards the only spot on the whole of the American continent where perfect toleration of opinion existed.

It was not long after the flight of the Eatons, those Puritan Baptists, who, having escaped the persecutions of the establishment in England, found their condition but little improved under the intolerant proceedings of the standing order of Massachusetts; it was not long after their exodus from Boston, before Strongfaith Bates, and a number of others, who had embraced similar sentiments, being obliged in like manner to flee from Massachusetts, placed themselves under the same discreet and liberal government of Providence, where they found perfect freedom to worship God, and observe the ordinances according to their own convictions of truth and duty.

Our narrative is now finished; and if it should be the means of creating, or increasing, in any mind, a repugnance to the union of Church and State; of deepening the love of religious liberty; of showing the importance of perfect freedom of religious opinions; of impressing upon the conscience and the heart the great truth that the Bible, and the Bible only, should be our guide in matters of faith and practice, and the right observance of the initiatory ordinance of the Gospel, it will not have been written in vain.

THE

First Church in Providence,

NOT THE

OLDEST BAPTIST CHURCH

IN AMERICA.

BY

S. ADLAM,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN NEWPORT, R. I.

NASHVILLE:
SOUTH-WESTERN PUBLISHING HOUSE,
GRAVES, MARKS & CO.
1858.

Introduction.

THE following pages owe their origin to a controversy going on since 1847, between the churches of Providence and Newport, as to priority of age.

Having in the latter part of 1849, become the pastor of the latter church, I found it on several accounts necessary to satisfy my mind where the truth lay. I therefore resolved to make as thorough an examination of the subject as my means, opportunities, and abilities would allow.

When I commenced my researches, I had no doubt but the truth was with the Providence church; and no one can be more surprised than was I, at the result to which I came. Nor could I be satisfied till I had repeated the investigation a second, a third, and a fourth time; and then

showed the whole to gentlemen in whose judgment I placed great confidence, and heard from them that they could perceive no mistake.

For the sake of distinctness and ease of reference, I have divided what is said into chapters, and placed the subject discussed in each chapter at its head.

It was not till I had fully attained my result, that I became acquainted with the manuscript referred to, and quoted in Chapter IV. The reading of that manuscript removed every suspicion that I had erred.

Should any reply, let me remind them, that the whole argument is contained in Chapter I. On that I rely; all the rest is intended to throw light upon and confirm that. Should I, therefore, be found to have erred (which I have earnestly endeavored to avoid) in any other part, my conclusions will remain untouched, unless that chapter be proved to be unsound.

I know of nothing that can be construed into a disrespect of the Providence church, except it be the notice I have taken of their Records; (by which I mean the Historic Sketch prefixed to them,) and I have done no more than to show that they cannot be relied on as valid historical testimony. No one now living is responsible for

them. I suppose that if a sketch were at present to be made by some of the able members of that church, it would not only differ from that in the Records, but would contradict them. Prof. Knowles, in his life of Roger Williams, has pointed out some errors. Dr. Hague, in his Historical Discourse, has, on a most important and even vital point, as far as our discussion is concerned, opposed them. Staples, though he has done it with a gentle hand, has alluded to the misconception concerning Thomas Olney. Prof. Gammell, a member of that church, and one of the committee to prepare the document read to the Association, in his life of Roger Williams, is at entire variance with the Records concerning that distinguished man. Indeed, any one who investigates facts for himself, will be convinced that on these Records he can place no reliance as to what occurred before the time of Tillinghast; they are quite as likely to mislead as to guide. On this account, especially as our most popular historians rely on them as ultimate authority, I consider it my duty to show fully their inaccuracy.

It will soon be perceived that I write not for popular reading; but I appeal to men who can reason and reflect.

I wish to state distinctly that one question, and that alone, is here discussed. I enquire not who in America were the first persons baptized, where, or by whom; nor when any other church was constituted. The question is, "Which is the oldest Baptist church in America? Is it the existing Newport, or the existing Providence church? It is not for another, but for itself, the Providence church contends; the church in Newport does the same. Simple and obvious as this remark may appear, it is not without importance in this discussion.

I have added an Appendix, in which I have more fully explained some things connected with the subject on which I have treated, but which it would not be well to consider in the body of the work.

I now leave what I have written to calm, reflecting, impartial men; their verdict will at last prevail, and to it I cheerfully submit.

S. A.

Newport, R. I.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRESENT CHURCH IN PROVIDENCE, A SECEDING, FROM AN OLDER CHURCH—ITS TRUE DATE, AND FOUNDERS.

FOUR things are claimed by the church in Providence: that Roger Williams was its founder and first pastor: that it was constituted in 1639: before any other in the State; and that it is the oldest of the Baptists in America. All this, with the exception of Roger Williams being its founder and first pastor, is inscribed on its bell; and also on a tablet in its Meeting-House. Thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, have read this tablet, and have supposed it to state undoubted facts. But was it constituted in 1639? Was it the first in the State? Is it the oldest of the Baptists in America? And was Roger Williams its founder and first pastor? Will a thorough examination sustain one of these positions? Let the evidence that follows decide.

Staples, in his Annals of Providence, says: "There were two Baptist churches in Providence, as early as 1652; one of the six principle, and the other of the five principle Baptists. This appears from a manuscript diary kept by John Comer, a Baptist preacher in Newport. It states that one of the members of the First Baptist church in Newport, "came to Providence, and

received imposition of hands from William Wickenden, pastor of a church there lately separated from the church under Thomas Olney, and that Mr. Wickenden and Gregory Dexter, returned to Newport with him; and that the same ordinance was administered to several others, who, in 1656, withdrew from the first church in Newport, and formed a new church there, etc." Page 410.

Comer, in his manuscript, spells Wickenden's name, as it was probably pronounced, *Wigginton;* and his exact words are: "Mr. William Vaughn, finding a number of Baptists in the town of Providence, lately joined together in special church covenant, in the faith and practice, and under the inspection of Mr. William Wigginton, being heretofore members of the church under Mr. Thomas Olney, of that town, he, *i. e.*, Mr. William Vaughn, went thither in the month of October, 1652, and submitted thereto (to the imposition of hands) upon which he returned to Newport, accompanied with Mr. William Wigginton, and Mr. Gregory Dexter, etc."

Callender says: "About the year 1653 or 54, there was a division in the Baptist church at Providence, about the right of laying on of hands, which some pleaded for as essentially necessary to church communion, and the others would leave indifferent. Hereupon they walked in two churches, one under C. Browne, Wickenden, etc., the other under Thomas Olney." Page 114.

Backus writes: "Thomas Olney, who had been a member of the Congregational church in Sa-

lem, but left them and came to Providence in 1638, was the next pastor of this Baptist church (founded by Roger Williams) until his death in 1682. But a division arose in the church in 1652, about the laying on of hands upon every member of the church after baptism. William Wickenden was a chief leader in that part of the church in Providence which held to laying on of hands upon each member, which they supposed to be intended in the sixth chapter of Hebrews; and he was an esteemed minister therein until he died in Feb. 23, 1669." Vol. 3, p. 217. Again: "Thomas Olney, senior, also died this year, (1682.) He was next to Mr. Williams in the pastoral office at Providence, and continued so to his death, over that part of the church who are called five principle Baptists, in distinction from those who parted from their brethren, about the year 1653, under the leading of elder Wickenden, holding to the laying on of hands upon every church member." Vol. 1, p. 505.

Before I make any remarks on what has been adduced, I wish to show that the above statements are so far above contradiction, that they have been in their general features endorsed by the Providence church itself. Dr. Hague, late pastor of that church, in his "Historical Discourse," prepared with great care, and received with uncommon satisfaction and respect by his people, does not deny a single statement that Comer, or Callender, or Backus has made, but as far as he refers to this subject, harmonizes with them.

Speaking, in order, of the pastors of the church when coming to Wickenden, page 95, he says: "With his name is connected our first intelligence of the rise of a controversy, which was long agitated in this town, and throughout the commonwealth;" and then discussing the subject to which he alludes, viz., the laying on of hands, he quotes from Comer thus: "In 1652, Rev. Wm. Vaughn, of Newport, embraced this view, and hearing that a church had been formed in Providence on this basis, under the care of Rev. Mr. Wickenden, he repaired thither, and having received the rite himself, obtained the aid of Mr. Wickenden in forming a similar body at Newport." Reviewing the ministry of Dexter, first the associate, and then the successor of Wickenden, Dr. Hague observes: "When Mr. Vaughn visited Providence, in 1652, in order to procure the aid of Mr. Wickenden in forming a church which should hold the laying on of hands as a Divine ordinance, Mr. Dexter accompanied them to Newport, and seems to have taken a part in that service; from which we may infer that he had united with those who had formed a separate church here under Mr. Wickenden." Page 98.

These statements prove that as early as 1652, 53, or 54, two distinct Baptist churches existed in Providence; that they were not only distinct bodies, but of different orders; one a six, the other a five principle Baptist church: that the six principle was under the care of Wickenden, Browne, and Dexter, while the five principle

church was under the charge of Thomas Olney.

They also prove, that Olney's was the original, and Wickenden's, Browne's, and Dexter's, six principle, the seceding church.

Two things show that the existing, is the seceding church. 1st. Every writer, including the records, mentions Browne, Wickenden, and Dexter as former pastors of that church. 2d. The present church, from 1652 until 1770, was known only as a six principle, while Olney's was the five principle church.

From this it follows that the existing church in Providence was not founded in 1639, but in 1652; it was not the first in the State, for it came out from an older church; it is not the oldest of the Baptists in America, for the Newport church was founded unquestionably, eight years before; and so far from Roger Williams being its founder and first pastor, he was in England when it was founded; and thirteen years before, he had ceased to be a Baptist.

It also follows, that the time when Roger Williams was baptized, has nothing to do in determining the age of the present church.

CHAPTER II.

RELIABLE TRADITION HARMONIZES WITH THE PRECEDING VIEW.

THAT no opportunity might be afforded for weakening the foregoing conclusion, I have kept strictly within the bounds of the highest documentary evidence; I now add, that tradition of the most reliable character, generally, if not universally, as far as the founders and first pastors of the church are concerned, agrees with the preceding view.

Stephen Hopkins, signer of the Declaration of Independence, grandson of Wickenden, uniformly affirmed that Wickenden was the first elder of the existing church, and asserted this in his "History of Providence," published in 1765. Moses Brown, that venerable Nestor of Providence, as he is called by Knowles, always held that his ancestor, Chad Brown, was the first elder of the Providence Baptist church. John Angel, born in 1691, claimed the same honor for his grandfather, Gregory Dexter.

Nor is there any discrepancy in these claims. When the present venerable President of the Rhode Island Historical Society, John Howland, Esq., now over ninety years of age, told Moses Brown, with whom he was intimate sixty or

seventy years ago, of the claims of Stephen Hopkins, which seemed to conflict with what he affirmed, Moses replied, "that there was no contradiction, for they were probably both elders at the same time." A statement undoubtedly true; and the same may be said of Dexter, cotemporary with them both. The fact appears to be thus: C. Brown, Wickenden, and Dexter, in withdrawing from Olney's and setting up the present church, labored for awhile together. Chad Brown seems to have died first, Wickenden next, and Dexter, living to a great age, survived both. Under these circumstances it would be natural for the descendants of each, as they did, to claim for their progenitors the honor of being the first elders of that church.

Nor were the immediate descendants of these men the only ones of this opinion; in the early days of Providence it was the general, if not the universal belief.

Callender, in 1738, says: "The most ancient inhabitants now alive, some of them above eighty years old, who personally knew Mr. Williams, and were well acquainted with many of the original settlers, never heard that Mr. Williams formed the Baptist church there, but always understood that Brown, Wickenden or Wigginton, Dexter, Olney, Tillinghast, etc., were the first founders of that church."*

* It is evident that Callender was not a little perplexed, as to the relationship of Roger Williams to the Baptist cause in Providence. After stating in the text, that it was said, Williams became a Baptist, and formed a Baptist church there, he adds in a note, "Since this was transcribed for the press, I find some

This shows that the general opinion of Roger Williams being the founder and first pastor of that church, is a modern theory; the farther you go back the less generally is it believed; till coming to the most ancient times, to the men who knew Williams, they are such entire strangers to it, that they never heard that he formed the Baptist church there. The first, and the second, and the third, and almost the fourth generation must pass away, before men can believe that any others than Wickenden, Brown, etc., were the founders of that church. Two other things deserve a passing notice. 1st. The college in 1770 was built on its present site, "because it was the home lot of Chad Brown, the first minister of the Baptist church;"* and 2d. On the bell, and on the

---

reasons to suspect that Mr. Williams did not form a church of the Anabaptists, and that he never joined with the Baptist church there. Only that he allowed them to be nearest the Scripture rule, and true primitive practice, as to the mode and subject of baptism. But that he himself waited for new apostles, etc.," and then follows the words I have quoted.

Morgan Edwards says: "I have one of the Century Sermons of Mr. Callender, with a *dele* upon this note, in his own handwriting." I have tried to find that sermon, that I may judge to what part of the note Callender referred; but I have not succeeded. What may we learn from that *dele?* That on some of the things referred to in this note, Callender changed his mind. What were they? Three distinct things are mentioned in the note. 1st. That Williams did not form a church (Baptist) in Providence. 2d. That he never united with the church there. 3d. That the most ancient inhabitants of that place, those who knew him, etc., never heard that he formed the church there, but that Brown, Wickenden, etc., were the founders of it.

Now it could not be the last of these items, that Callender changed his mind upon; for this would be to convict himself of falsehood in originally making the statement. It must have been concerning the first and second items that the mind of Callender underwent a change; so that the *dele* does not affect the quotation I have made.

* Howland in Knowles' Life of Roger Williams, p. 174. Note.

tablet, Roger Williams is not mentioned as the founder of the church. There is reason tc believe that if an attempt had been made to do it, it would have been stoutly resisted by many in that day; and even by some of the leading men in the building of the house. Indeed, there are many of the most aged and well-informed men of Providence at this day, who contend that Roger Williams was not the founder of that church. All this shows that tradition agrees with the documentary evidence before adduced. And yet all depends upon the founders and first pastors of the church; for Williams' church was founded in 1639, but Chad Brown's, Wickenden's, and Dexter's, not till 1652. The mistake lies in the existing church, taking not its own, but another's date.

CHAPTER III.

THE OLD CHURCH, AND THE RELATION OF THE EXISTING CHURCH TO IT.

HAVING shown that the present separated from the old five principle church, in the year 1652, we feel some interest to enquire concerning the fate of the original body.

Comer, Callender, and Backus, all agree that it remained under the care of Thomas Olney. As there is no difference of opinion on this, I shall only make one quotation, and that from Backus, already given. "Mr. Thomas Olney, senior, died this year, (1682.) He was next to Mr. Williams in the pastoral office at Providence, and continued so to his death, over that part of the church who are called five principle Baptists, in distinction from those who parted from their brethren about the year 1653, under the leading of Elder Wickenden, etc." Vol. I., p. 505.

A melancholy interest invests the last notice we have of this ancient church. It continued till early in the last century, when it became extinct, leaving no records, and but few events in its history behind. The fullest information of it I have found is in a note by Callender, on the 115 page of his discourse. Speaking of this

church, he adds below, "This last continued till about twenty years, when, becoming destitute of of an elder, the members were united with other churches;" and further adds, "At present there is some prospect of their re-establishment in church order."

This was written in 1738. The church had then been extinct about twenty years; that is, it lost its visibility about 1718. Morgan Edwards says, that the church under Olney continued till 1715. So that it continued after the division in 1652 for more than sixty years, when, discouraged, they scattered, never to be united again. And thus passed away the original church, and the waves of time have almost obliterated its remembrance from the minds of men. Callender, indeed, thought when he wrote that it might be re-established, and in this he would have rejoiced, as it would have afforded him a church that would hold communion with him, and with the people under his care; but he was disappointed, and for more than one hundred and thirty years, the old church in Providence is among the things that were.

After this review, what are we to understand Dr. Hague to refer to (p. 99) when he says, that "the breach which then (1652) arose out of the controversy about laying on of hands as a Divine rite, was afterwards healed?" How was it healed? By whom? And on what conditions? Did Wickenden's church ever give up its visibility, or merge itself into any other body? From the time of its formation in 1652, till under Dr.

Manning, 1770, did it not continue, strictly, by profession, and in fact, a six principle church? And when an attempt was made during his ministry to relax somewhat the stringency of the six principles, was it accomplished without great difficulty, and did it not cost a division? It was not till 1791, that the church clearly decided to admit as members those who did not hold the six principles; nor till 1808, that these sentiments were formally given up.

Dr. Hague's language seems to imply, that the two churches came together and formed but one. No such an event can I trace in the history of either church. For more than sixty years they existed side by side, without once, as far as I know, having communed together. And as to the existing church, for more than a hundred years, it is not too much to say, that it was in its communion, among the strictest of the strict; nor do I know of an instance during that period, of an attempt to relax the vigor of their practice without producing a re-action, and drawing the bounds of church fellowship within narrower limits.

It sometimes happens that when a church is reduced low, and is in distress, another will come to its aid; but the old Providence church, after having struggled for existence for more than sixty years, died unpitied, and unwept. Has any one a right to take her date, and claim her founder? I trow not. The only place for the inscription, "This church was founded A. D. 1639," is the grave of Roger Williams' church.

CHAPTER IV.

ANCIENT HISTORY SUSTAINS THE CLAIMS OF THE NEWPORT CHURCH.

WE have found that the proper date of the Providence church is not 1639, but 1652, and thus it cannot be the oldest of the Baptists in America. We now observe, that ancient history ascribed this priority as to age, to the church at Newport.

Comer, the first, and for the early history of our denomination, the most reliable of writers, ascribes distinctly and repeatedly this priority to the Newport church. He had formed the design, more than a hundred and twenty years ago, of writing the history of the American Baptists; and in that work, which he only lived to commence, but which embraces an account of this church, he says in one place, "That it is the first of the Baptist denomination." And closing his history of it, says, "Thus I have briefly given some account of the settlement and progress of the first Baptist church on Rhode Island, in New England, and the first in America."

This was written about 1730; and to those acquainted with Comer, nothing need be said of the value of this testimony. For others, I will

extract from Benedict a brief notice of his character. "He began his education at Cambridge, but finished it at New Haven. He bid fair to be one of the most eminent ministers of his day; his character was unspotted, and his talents respectable and popular; he had conceived the design of writing the history of the American Baptists, and for the purpose of forwarding it, traveled as far as Philadelphia, (a great undertaking at that day,) opened a correspondence with persons in the different colonies, and also in England, Ireland, etc."

This excellent man, who took unwearied pains to procure for his history the most correct information, was especially distinguished for the extreme accuracy of his dates, was, when he wrote the above, himself a six principle Baptist; was intimately acquainted with the church at Providence, and had advantages for knowing its early history, that no other historian has since possessed.

From the way in which he asserts it, the priority of the Newport church must have been a universally conceded fact. He was careful to excess, not to record as certain, that on which any suspicion rested; and yet this father of American Baptist history, whose veracity has never been questioned, with 1644 as the acknowledged date of the Newport church, states, that in age it is prior to any other Baptist church in America. It is true, and I was sorry to see it, some later hand has added in a note, "Excepting that of Providence." Who wrote this I will not say,

but no one should touch Comer's writings, unless he is a more reliable witness, than that painstaking and impartial man.

Besides his general carefulness, he was, when he wrote the above, on the most favorable terms with the Providence church, while a difficulty had occurred between him and the Newport church which caused him the most painful feelings. While pastor of that church, he urged upon them the imposition of hands with considerable earnestness, which brought on discussion and alienation, till at last a separation took place, when he immediately passed under the imposition of hands and became the pastor of a six principle church. It is true, that the breach was afterwards healed, and the account of the reconciliation, the church permitted him to make—the last, of course, of his valuable entries in our records. And though the separation was unpleasant, Comer's name is still held in affectionate remembrance by the church.

Now, it was while suffering from the above cause, when, if ever, he was under temptation to suppress the truth, that he most unhesitatingly affirms the Newport church to be the first of the Baptists in America. He was, however, above temptation, to pervert on any occasion the truth; and he must have known that what he wrote was not only correct, but it was at that time, generally, if not universally acknowledged to be so. He makes no exception to this remark, and he was too well acquainted with the history of the church in Providence to except that—for he well

knew that it was not formed till 1652, eight years after that in Newport.

Should it appear strange, that if the claim of the Newport church was well founded, it should suffer it to be taken away, and not reclaimed till within a few years, the solution is plain.

Soon after the church at Providence had affixed to itself a wrong date, the war of the Revolution came on; and in that great national crisis, no place suffered more than Newport. It was early taken, and long held by the British forces; the property of its citizens was taken; its commerce crippled; its merchants, distinguished for enterprise, intelligence, and wealth, fled, never to return. Amid the general distress, none suffered more than the first church. Its pastor was forced from his charge—its members were scattered—its sanctuary, dedicated by the sainted and talented Callender, and where, with so much sweetness he had preached the gospel, was seized, desecrated, mangled, for the use of the British soldiers—and when, at last, a few returned and looked on the desolation of their beloved Zion, they wept; they were poor, long had they to struggle even for existence, and probably knew not, or thought not, that their birthright was about to be taken from them. A series of events occurred that left not the church at liberty to put forth her appeal for that distinction which she so fairly deserves, and which at first, we doubt not, every church freely accorded to her. But still the members felt, and with them the island at large, an assurance that no-

thing could shake, that it was this church which first in America raised aloft the Baptist standard, and that its founder and first members toiled and suffered, and knew what prison walls and scourges were, before our sister church at Providence had breathed the breath of life. Nor did they doubt but at last they could make it appear. Dates they knew somewhere or somehow were wrong; and suspected their own; and while looking over the family title deeds to verify or correct theirs, they found that in some way or other their sister had mistaken hers.

CHAPTER V.

SOURCE OF PREVAILING ERRORS—HOPKINS—CHURCH RECORDS.

THE church at Providence never has had any creed, or any covenant; till the year 1700 it had no meeting-house, but in fine weather worshiped in a grove, and when inclement, in private houses; nor till the year 1775, had it any regular records. Can we be surprised, that in tracing the history of such a body, a hundred years after its origin, unless ancient writers are carefully studied, that material errors will be made?

Those who first in modern times (I mean within the last hundred years) undertook to write concerning the Providence church, though excellent men in other respects, were sadly unqualified for their work. The days of Comer and of Callender had passed away. It seems as though between 1760 and 80, Baptist history in Providence underwent a total eclipse. Different persons and churches were strangely jumbled together; and as the result of this confusion, the present church assumed a position it did not before hold, and to which, by right, it has not the shadow of a claim.

Stephen Hopkins, in 1765, is the first I can

discover who assigned to the present church a date earlier than 1652; and he endeavored to unite the impossible conditions of the true founder and this early date. He claimed for his grandfather Wickenden, the honor of being its first elder, and in this he was correct; but he committed a grave mistake in attributing by implication to Wickenden the baptism of those who were baptized in 1638 or 39—an honor that belongs indisputably to Roger Williams. Succeeding writers saw that Hopkins' early date must be given up, if Wickenden were retained as the first pastor; and, themselves misled, they adopted the erroneous date, and pushing aside its true founder, Hopkins' grandfather, they put Roger Williams in his place. And thus by two errors, one built on the other, Roger Williams is made the founder and first pastor of a church with which we know not that he ever worshiped, or had the least sympathy, and which did not even begin to exist till thirteen years after he had ceased to be a Baptist; and that church has been led to assume a distinction which belongs to another.

It would be unnecessary to point out in detail the errors of each writer, after Stephen Hopkins. The way is the same in all. They confound Roger Williams' with the present church, and thus carry back its date to thirteen years before it began to exist.

The errors and misconceptions arising therefrom are seen in a striking manner in the Records of the Providence church. And as these records have, by being published, become public

property, as they are appealed to by our most widely read historians, and as upon them ultimately must rest the claims of the Providence church, we shall examine what reliance can be placed upon them.

That the author or compiler of these records was honest, I doubt not; but that he possessed the information, the ability for patient research, and the discrimination necessary for a historian, I cannot believe. Take as examples the following serious errors:

"So little did he know of the true origin of that church, whose history for more than a hundred years he undertook to compile, that he not only makes Roger Williams to be its first pastor, but represents that he was its pastor about four years, when it is well known that he was a Baptist only four months! After he left the Baptists, Roger Williams lived forty-three years, and yet from these records, you would not suspect but he was a Baptist to the day of his death. After being a Baptist four months, Williams denied that there was any true ministry, or any true church, and yet in these records he is represented at the end of four years as resigning his pastoral office to Brown and Wickenden!"

This specimen would be enough to satisfy any who were seeking the truth; but proceed, and mark the short but very inaccurate account of Thomas Olney. That I may not be charged with unfairness or misrepresentation, I will quote it entire.

"Rev. Thomas Olney succeeded (Gregory Dex-

ter) to the pastoral office. He was born at Hertford, in England, about the year 1631, and came to Providence in 1654; but when baptized or ordained is not known. He was the chief who made a division about laying on of hands. He and others withdrew, and formed a separate church, but it continued only a short time. He died June 11, 1722, and was buried in his own field."

Difficult would it be in the same amount of language to find so much misconception and error as here. Never should Thomas Olney, to whom justice has not yet been done, have been spoken of thus. The writer, doubtless, intended to be correct; but so little did he know of history, that he confounded two individuals, probably father and son, together. If he alludes to the son, then it was not in his, but in his father's day that the division occurred. If he alludes to the father, then he died, not in 1722, but forty years before, in 1682. This confusion of persons and dates, would invalidate any testimony. But this is not all. Olney is placed as the successor of Brown, Wickenden, and Dexter. In the ministry he preceded them all; and never was pastor of the church which they set up. The records say that he was the chief who made the division, and that he and others with him withdrew and formed a separate church. It was Wickenden and his associates that went off; and even Dr. Hague says, it was they who formed the separate church. The records say that he came to Providence in 1654; he was town treasurer of that

place in 1639. But I forbear. It may be said, that the records speak not of the father, but of the son. Then where is the evidence that the Olney who died in 1722, was pastor of Wickenden's church after Dexter's death; that he made a division about the laying on of hands; that he withdrew and formed a separate church? Is there a single ancient writer that has recorded it, or alluded to it? And if the son be alluded to, where, in giving an account of Baptist ministers in Providence, is the father alluded to, that ancient man in whose day a division did take place; and who saw, in 1652, his church receive such a wound, that after sixty years struggling for existence, it at last expired?

Look also at Chad Brown; he is made pastor of the church ten years before it began to exist!

But I will pursue this subject no farther. What is the value of records like these? And yet it is by these records, and documents like them, that the Providence church carries its date back to 1639, claims to be the first in the State, and the oldest of the Baptists in America.

We have seen in Chapter I., how completely history refutes the claims of that church; but, if possible, the records on which they rely refutes them more completely still.

Thinking men will be ready to doubt, if records so prepared, are the highest authority on which grave historians rest in giving an account of that church, and on which that church's peculiar claims depend. But hear what Benedict, who well knows the facts, in 1848, says. Closing, in his history,

his notice of this church, he observes, "My present historical details are taken partly from my first volume, and partly from Hague's Historical Discourse, delivered in 1839, at the expiration of two hundred years from the founding of the church. *But the church records are the only source of information to us all!*" Is it so? Is it by records like these that the ancient, and in her early days, when she stood all alone, the suffering church at Newport, is to be disrobed of her distinction, and another that did not begin to be, till she had endured fine, imprisonment, and scourging for the Baptist cause, to receive it? Is it by such records that the church in Providence claims to be the first in the State, and the oldest of the Baptists in America? Then let the present generation, and let posterity know on what these claims rest. The claims and the records are of equal value—they are both alike.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUSION.

My investigation is brought to a close. I have pursued it fearlessly; I hope fairly. The time has fully come, when the errors that have produced a most disastrous effect upon the general history of our denomination, should, with a faithful but truthful hand, be laid bare. Ancient authors should again be heard, and modern misconception and confusion of thought should resign their rule. Little, when I commenced my inquiries, did I anticipate my result. I expected that with great plainness of speech, (the only thing allowable in a discussion where truth is at stake,) I should have to show to the Newport church the unsoundness of its claims. I should not have spoken as I have, had I not surveyed, as far as I could, the entire field. I am earnest, but it is the earnestness of conviction; nor have I ventured upon a single position without probing it to the foundation, and enquiring if it can be successfully assailed. And happy am I, that I have been speaking of a church that has so many members, able, if I have committed mistakes, to detect and expose them. If I have not been thorough in my examination—if I have misquoted or

misrepresented any author—or if I have passed by, or suppressed any ancient document, or kept back any circumstances that would place this subject in a different light, they will know it. If in 1652 there were not in Providence two churches, one a five, and the other a six principle church—if theirs was not the seceding, and Olney's the original body—if the old church did not, about the year 1715, die out—if tradition does not mention Brown, Wickenden, etc., and not Roger Williams, as the founders of the present church—if there is not, even to this day, in Providence, among some of its oldest and best informed inhabitants, a conviction which nothing can shake, that Roger Williams was not the founder of their church—if the earliest history does not unhesitatingly assign priority of age to the church at Newport — if the records of the Providence church can be vindicated—if the date 1639 does not belong to another body, and not to themselves—and if all their claims are not based on misconception and error, they can make it appear. The documents on which I have relied are at their command, within the sound of their bell, if not immediately under their hand. But if they cannot disprove what I have said, (and I think they cannot,) then, if there be a single truth on which we can rely, the Providence church was not founded in 1639, but in 1652; it was not the first in the State, nor is it the oldest in America; and if there is a church to which that distinction belongs of right, and fairly beyond dispute, it is the Newport church.

WHICH WAS THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ESTABLISHED IN AMERICA?

It will be seen that I have not claimed in the preceding discussion all that belongs to the Newport church. It is not only, according to history, the oldest, but also the first Baptist church established in America. My reason for not insisting on this before, was the desire to keep one question steadily before the mind; and that being settled, we could better proceed. The question as to which is the oldest church having been discussed, we can now attend to that at the head of this section.

I can see no evidence that Roger Williams, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, established a Baptist church in Providence. When he was baptized, he doubtless intended to do this; but he was not the man, and the attempt was a failure.

That the church which he began to collect fell to pieces soon after he left them, is what we should expect; and is, as far as I can learn, the uniform declaration of writers of that day.

It has been the practice with Baptist writers, to put this down as Pedobaptist misrepresentation; but on what ground I know not. They gave a true statement of him and his views, viz:

that after being a Baptist four months, he renounced his baptism, the ministry, and the church, believing that there was no true visible church, no true ministry, nor any one that had a right to administer ordinances. If they speak truthfully concerning him, why should they be doubted when they speak concerning his church? If they thought his church did exist, they must have known that it would be a standing monument, known and read of all men, against their declarations.

Look at the circumstances also. Here was a church gathered by one, in every respect their leader, the only learned man among them, and whose influence over them at that time was immense; as soon as he was baptized, and had baptized them, he began to doubt the propriety of the act. And in the space of four months had fully made up his mind, that there was neither a true ministry, nor true church on earth; a conviction so strong, that he never wavered in it for the forty-three years of his after life. What could be expected of these brethren who had not the light which we enjoy, but were just emerging out of darkness, themselves, as well as their leader having been bred in the belief, that a regular succession from the apostles downward was necessary to a true church and a true ministry? To persuade us that they would, under these circumstances, continue together as a church, requires the most undoubted evidence—but instead of this, the evidence is the contrary way.

The perplexity into which these brethren were

thrown for want of a valid administrator is seen by an account introduced by Backus. They heard that the Queen of Hungary, or some in those parts, had a register of a regular succession from the apostles, and they thought of sending Mr. Thomas Olney into that country for it.

It is well that a Baptist writer has recorded this; for of all the strange things recorded by Pedobaptists concerning our brethren at Providence, this is the strangest of all. Send to the Queen of Hungary, or some in those parts, for a register of a regular succession from the apostles, that they might be able to establish a valid Baptist church! It shows how much Roger Williams had terrified them as to succession. I do not blame them. They were simple-hearted, honest, conscientious men, willing to do all they could, and to go anywhere, so that they may obey the Savior; but they were fettered with what does not trouble us, with the idea of "succession." And if any are disposed to smile at these unlettered Baptists, let them remember, that in 1850, there are thousands of learned men bound hand and foot, and who scarcely dare think their own thoughts, on account of the "succession." These Providence Baptists showed not a little vigor in emancipating themselves as soon as they did. But it is too much to believe, without strong evidence, that they could stand the shock of Williams' arguments, so as to keep as a church together. It must have appeared like presumption for them, all lay brethren, to attempt to administer ordinances, when Williams, their

pastor, declared that no man without a special commission from Heaven had a right to do it. And as to Williams ordaining any one during the four months that he was a Baptist, and while his mind was so distressingly agitated, it is too absurd for a moment to be believed.

There is one writer whose testimony is of the highest value on this subject: I allude to Thomas Lechford, who was in New England from 1637, till about August 1641; and among other places, he visited Providence, somewhere I judge about the close of 1640, or the beginning of 1641. He enquired with great diligence into the ecclesiastical affairs of the country, and gave a faithful account. Against the Baptists he had no special prejudices, more than against the Congregationalists, for he was an Episcopalian. But whatever were his own convictions, I have gained in many respects, a more exact view of New England during these four years from him, than from any other person. When speaking of Providence he says: "At Providence, which is twenty miles from the said island (Rhode Island, which he had also visited,) lives Master *Williams*, and his company, of divers opinions; most are Anabaptists; they hold there is no true visible church in the *Bay*, nor in the world, nor any true ministry."

Mark this account. It is from an eye witness, about a year and a half after Williams renounced baptism, churches, ministry, and all. It is from a discriminating writer; he does not say that all were Anabaptists, but that most were. He has

not a word of reproach to utter against them or Williams. He tells things just as they are. Providence at that time also was small, and had but few inhabitants, so that he could easily become acquainted with them. Now the opinion of these Anabaptists at Providence was, that there was no true visible church in the Bay, nor in the world, nor any true ministry. Of course they could not have had a church. Lechford, then, a purely unexceptionable witness, confirms what others have said, that Roger Williams' church, after he left them, crumbled to pieces.

We have seen from Callender, that in his day, the oldest men, those who knew him, and were well acquainted with many of the most ancient inhabitants, never heard that Roger Williams was the founder of the Baptist church there. So soon, and so completely was that church dissolved.*

When Olney's church was formed I cannot tell: but as Comer, dating the Newport church no farther back than 1644, says it was the first of the Baptist denomination in America, Olney's

* Callender's opinion may be quoted against this view. But we have seen under the foregoing note, that Callender himself was perplexed concerning the relation of Williams to the Baptist cause. He opposes the view of Neale, that the church of Williams crumbled to pieces, because a few years after, a flourishing Baptist church was there. As Callender, however, had, while transcribing his sermon for the press, changed his mind about Williams forming a church in Providence, he must have supposed, that finding a flourishing Baptist church there some years afterwards, might as well be accounted for on the supposition that it was formed by Brown, Wickenden, etc., as by its being originally formed by Williams, and having stood while he, its foundation, fell—fell as a Baptist to rise no more. This latter view is undoubtedly correct. Nor have we any evidence that Callender, on this point, went back to the views of the text.

church could not have been formed till after that period.

I think it could not have been formed till about the year 1650. My reasons are, I find no trace of a Baptist church in Providence, after the failure of Roger Williams, till after that year. The first intimation of a church there, I find in the fall of 1651, when Holmes, after being scourged in Boston, returning home says, "The brethren of our town (Rehoboth) and Providence, having taken pains to meet me four miles in the woods, we rejoiced together." This occurred in September, 1651. Even this notice does not prove that a church existed in Providence at that time, for he speaks simply of the brethren of Rehoboth and of Providence. In Rehoboth there was no Baptist church, for Holmes and his brethren then belonged to the church at Newport; and we are not certain their brethren at Providence were gathered into a distinct church, any more than were those of Rehoboth.

That it was as late as I have fixed also appears from another circumstance. I have not been able to find a single individual, out of Providence, who united with that church till after 1652; but every Baptist up to that time, known to belong to a church, live where he may, belonged to the church at Newport. We know that in the year 1651, the Newport church had members in Lynn, and in Rehoboth, in Mass.; and that persons came from Connecticut to unite with it. The case of the brethren in Rehoboth is peculiarly in point. In 1650 they left the Con-

gregationalists, and became Baptists. If at that time a church had existed in Providence, a neighboring town, how natural they should unite with it, so near and easy of access, and not go all the way down to Newport to unite with the church there. The only way to account for this is, that there was no church at Providence, and no administrator there to whom they could apply.

It may be said that the number of Baptists whose names are recorded at that early date is few. Granted, but how does it happen that all those in another State, from thirty to near a hundred miles from Newport, should belong to that church, and not one of them to Providence?

Shall I mention one or two circumstances more. Before 1652, some work had been performed in Massachusetts; the Baptist standard had been lifted up on its high places. Enough had been done by that time to lay the foundation for a Baptist church in Boston, in 1665, and to lead the first President of Cambridge College so to look at the subject, as ultimately to become a Baptist. Who did that work? The members of the Newport church. Some little suffering before that time had been endured for the Baptist cause. Baptists had been fined, imprisoned, scourged. Newport, and she alone, was the suffering church. And, what, with the exception of Roger Williams' attempt and failure, to the year 1652, and even beyond it, is nearly the entire history of our denomination, but the history of that same church?

How can we account for this, but on the sup-

position that the church at Newport was the first Baptist church established in America? If before 1644 a church did exist in Providence, how is it, that neither friend nor foe has noticed her; that every Baptist passed her by, even her nearest neighbors, and hurried down to Newport? How is it that for so many years she did nothing, suffered nothing, that no historian has been able to glean from her a line, and that not a single sign of vitality has been, up to that period, recorded of her?

The only conclusion to which we can come is, that the Newport church is not only older than the present church at Providence, but older than that from which it came off.

Williams, indeed, touched the Baptist standard, but ere he raised it, his hand trembled, and it fell. It was seized by a steadier hand; at Newport it was raised, and far and near they came to it; it was carried into the heart of Massachusetts, and a work was commenced which till the last setting of the sun, shall never cease; and this, before we have any evidence that a church in Providence had begun to be.

Among the evils that have resulted from the wrong date of the Providence church, has been the prominence given to Roger Williams. It is greatly to be regretted, that it ever entered into the mind of any one to make him, in America, the founder of our denomination. In no sense was he so. Well would it be for Baptists, and for Williams himself, could his short and fitful attempt to become a Baptist, be obliterated from

the minds of men. A man only four months a Baptist, and then renouncing his baptism for ever, to be lauded and magnified as the founder of the Baptist denomination in the new world! As a leader in civil and religious liberty, I do him homage; as a Baptist I owe him nothing.

There is another name, long, too long concealed, by Williams being placed before him, who will in after times be regarded with unmingled affection and respect, as the true founder of the Baptist cause in this country. That orb of purest lustre will yet shine forth, and Baptists, whether they regard his spotless character, his talents, his learning, the services he rendered, the urbanity and the modesty that distinguished him, will mention JOHN CLARK as the real founder of our denomination in America. And when Baptist history is better understood than it is at present, every one, pointing to that venerable church which, on one of earth's loveliest spots he established, will say, "*This is the mother of us all!*"

APPENDIX.

In every department of Baptist history I confess myself greatly interested. Its importance is only next to the Bible. Indeed, by far the largest portion of the New Testament is the history of the early churches. It is a matter of no little gratification to me that much pertaining to the History of Baptists is yearly clearing up, and their sole claims to an apostolic origin more and more satisfactorily vindicated.

The foregoing historical paper, by Elder S. Adlam, I read several years since with very great interest and satisfaction, and a correspondence followed.

In the course of my reading, I met with the following statements in Crosby, and in the History of the Philadelphia Association, to which I called the attention of Elder Adlam.

"*When the first church in Newport was one hundred years old, in* 1738, *Mr. John Callender, their minister, delivered and published a sermon on the occasion.*" Note on page 455.

This is Cotton Mather's testimony as to the perpetuity of Williams' informal society. If it was in existence when Mather wrote, he well knew it. If it dissolved when Williams

left it, and repudiated it as a Scriptural church he knew it; and he says it "*came to nothing*," there was nothing left for even Mather to reproach, and Mather died in 1727–8.

"One Roger Williams, a preacher, arrived in New England about the year 1630; was first an assistant in the church of Salem, and afterwards pastor. This man, a difference happening between the government and him, caused a great deal of trouble and vexation. At length the magistrates passed the sentence of banishment upon him; upon which he removed with a few of his own sect, and settled at a place called Providence. 'There they proceeded,' says Mr. Mather, 'not only unto the gathering of a thing like a church, but unto the renouncing their infant baptism.' After this, he says, he turned *Seeker* and *Familist*, and the church came to nothing."*

In reply to this letter, in which I inquired if his historical sketch had ever been successfully assailed—its dates and facts questioned—also, if the articles of faith were in existence, upon which the Newport church was constituted; also for a copy of the inscription upon Clark's grave-stone. I received the following, parts of which are for one reason important here, as they will be interesting.

---

* See Mather's Eccl. Hist. of New England, p. 7, quoted from Crosby, Vol. i. p. 117.

NEWPORT, R. I., May 4th, 1857.

Rev. J. R. Graves.

MY DEAR BRO.:—In my last, I intimated that I hoped, notwithstanding the demands made on my energies by the church, I should be able to complete the work I have begun. That a history of the early Baptists of America is desirable, all who have paid attention to the subject must allow. Nothing that I have seen is correct, and what information is given, is presented in so involved and perplexed a way, as to deprive it of all interest and power. Besides, the points in which they were in advance of all other Christians, and which, therefore, must constitute their peculiar claim to our attention, has been most imperfectly set forth. On these accounts, I think it is due to the cause of truth, that something more should be done than has been hitherto attempted to place the early history of our denomination in this country in a clear light; and I know of no place where it can be better done than in Newport. I have, therefore, kept this constantly in view, gleaning every fact that has come under my notice, and putting it, as well as I can, in its proper place, so as at last to make a correct and intelligible whole; showing not only the events as they transpired, but also the principles which they body forth, and which binds them in unity together. With engagements like mine, such a process must be slow, but I hope an opportunity may occur when I may complete,

however imperfectly, what is so desirable to be done.

Yourself would have the first offer of the work when it is in a fit state to go out of my own hands. Your interest in the subject, and your generous course toward myself demand this; and I hope I am not insensible of kindness, come from what source it may. * * *

Respecting my pamphlet, I would observe, that I see no reason to alter a single statement, or the general conclusion to which, in it, I came. Again and again have I reviewed it; I know that the same has been done by those who are able to detect errors, if any there be in it, and whose feelings would prompt them to do it. I have not a particle of doubt but the result will at length, however slowly, be placed among the indubitable facts of history. My mind is entirely at rest as far as that is concerned.

You will recollect that my object in that pamphlet was to show that the first church in Providence was not constituted, as it professes to have been, in 1639, but in 1652; and that instead of being the first church constituted in Providence, it came out, in the year just mentioned, from an older church in that place; and still more, that instead of having been originally a regular Baptist church, it left the regular Baptist church in Providence, its members having embraced the principles ot the six principle Baptists.

When I wrote that pamphlet I said nothing of *the real age of the first Baptist church in Newport;* the age *generally* assigned to it answering

my purpose as well as an earlier date. *I did not, however, concede that the correct date of the Newport church was, as is generally stated,* 1644 *; for I have reasons for thinking that its proper date was some years earlier.* But as this was not the subject I undertook to discuss, I passed it by. It was in reference to my views, unexpressed, that I stated on page 156: "I wish to state distinctly that one question, and that alone is here discussed. I enquire not who in America were the first persons baptized, where, or by whom; nor when any other church was constituted. The question is, "Which is the oldest Baptist church in America? Is it the existing Newport, or the existing Providence church?" etc.

You ask the question, how can the centenerary sermon of Callender, preached in 1738, agree with the date 1644, that has been assigned to the Newport church?

After all the investigations I have made, I have come to the conclusion that the true date of the Newport church is 1638, and that any other is altogether arbitrary.

My reasons for these views are the following: We know that in the year 1638, a church was formed on the island, and Dr. Clarke became its pastor, and we have no information that that church ever became extinct. On the island there is no allusion to such an event in any record, nor does tradition ever speak of our church but as the original church on the island; other churches came out from us, we from no other. But in all the discussions that are recorded to have taken

place, baptism never had a place. Now it would be next to impossible that the pastor of the original church should have changed his sentiments on the subject of baptism, and should have been baptized himself, without its having caused some discussion on the subject. But instead of this, not a word can we find in any record, nor the least allusion in any tradition, that Dr. Clark ever changed, on the island. his views concerning baptism, or that he was ever in this country baptized. The only way to account for this is, that no such an event ever occurred, that he came to this country as a Baptist, and that as such he was known from the beginning. Another evidence, at least of strong probability, that the church on the Island was, as explained, Baptist from the beginning, is seen in the fact, that no Pedobaptist church existed on the Island till near sixty years after its settlement; and we never have heard of a single child that was baptized on the island for that time. Can we now suppose, that if the church was originally Pedobaptist, this would have been the case? Would not the Pedobaptist portion, when Clark was baptized, have continued the old organization, and have had at least occasional preaching of that order till they had strength sufficient to have a settled pastor among them? Taking now all into view, I cannot conceive it at all probable, that Clark was a Pedobaptist, and the pastor of a Pedobaptist church, and that yet he should change his sentiments, and Pedobaptism be overturned for near sixty years, and yet this done so

quietly, that it caused no feeling, no discussion, and this too among men intelligent, and able, as well as ready, to defend their sentiments with earnestness, caring little for peace when they thought truth was at stake? Did such a thing ever occur? Is it probable? Is it possible? If not, then we must conclude that the church has always been what it has been universally, on the island, conceded to have been, a Baptist church from the beginning. That beginning was in 1638.

To throw still more light on the subject, I observe that the results were just what may have been expected in the case if matters were as I have supposed. Most of those that came to the island were undoubtedly Pedobaptists. But they had been terribly persecuted by the Pedobaptist ministers of Massachusetts, while for Clark, however much they may differ from him, they had the greatest respect; and in his honesty they placed the most unlimited confidence. They would listen to him while he would show the unscriptural character of Pedobaptism, and were, there is every reason to believe, convinced by him: but at that time the Quaker doctrine concerning ordinances was introduced into the island; and as many of the heathen, when their former sentiments have been proved false, fly not to the truth, but to infidelity; so those Pedobaptists, finding that Pedobaptism was unscriptural, very readily fell into the views then spread on the island, with amazing zeal, that all ordinances were done away, and that spiritual worship was the

only thing acceptable in the sight of God. In other words, they became Quakers. And so we find for *near sixty years*, the island was divided between Baptists and Quakers; the Quakers forming by far the largest number, and numbering in their ranks the leading men that came out of Massachusetts. All this is perfectly reasonable on the supposition that Clark commenced his labors as a Baptist on the island, and thus undermined Pedobaptism, but most unaccountable on the supposition that he was a Pedobaptist, and that the church which he served was a Pedobaptist church.

I have stated that I thought he was acquainted with, if not ecclesiastically connected with the church in London, under the care of Spilsbury, Kiffin, etc. My reason for this opinion is, that when Obadiah Holmes wrote an account of his sufferings in Massachusetts, in the year 1651, he sent it to "the well-beloved brethren, John Spilsbury, William Kiffin, and the rest that in London who stand fast in that faith, and continue to walk steadfastly in that order of the gospel which was once delivered to the saints by Jesus Christ." And as he was not a Baptist in England, but was baptized by Dr. Clark in this country, I think it probable he became acquainted with these brethren by Dr. Clark; and as Dr. Clark was acquainted with them, I think it probable his acquaintance must have been formed with them in England; and to have been acquainted with them, under the then existing circumstances, was

nearly the same as to be ecclesiastically connected with them.

But while I think, for the above reasons, that 1638 is the correct date of the church, still this is not necessary in order to prove that ours is the oldest Baptist church in America; for as the first in Providence was not constituted till 1652, if our church did not exist till 1644, we are the older by eight years.

Touching the faith of John Clark: In 1651, among the things he undertook to defend as a part of his faith, before the ministers and magistrates of Massachusetts, but which they evaded, we find after he had proved "that baptism or dipping in water is one of the commands of this Lord Jesus Christ," and "that a visible believer or disciple of Christ Jesus, (that is, one that manifesteth repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus Christ,) is the only person that is to be baptized with that visible baptism or dipping of Jesus Christ in water;" he then adds, "and also the only person that is to walk in the visible order of his house," are such baptized persons. And as you may wish to have his own words on this subject, I will transcribe them.

"That he" [the immersed believer] "is the only person that is to enter into, and walk in the visible order of his house, will evidently appear, if the order in which our Lord left his house when he went to his Father to receive his kingdom be duly considered; for in his last will and testament we shall find it thus recorded: when our Lord was about to be gone, he gave order unto

his apostles, whom he made stewards in his house of the mysteries of God, to make him disciples of all nations; and that such as were so made should then be baptized, and so visibly planted into Christ, and put on Christ; and having so received him, should walk in him, observing all things whatsoever he had commanded; the first thing whereof, as touching order, was to be added or joined one to another in the fellowship of the gospel, by a mutual professed subjection to the sceptre of Christ, and being a company thus called out of the world, from worldly vanities and worldly worships, after Christ Jesus the Lord, (which is the proper English of these words, the Church of Christ, and is in other terms called the household of faith,) should steadfastly continue together in the apostole's doctrine, *sci.*, the consolation, reproof, and instruction thereof; in fellowship; *sci.*, mutual support both inward and outward; in breaking of bread, thereby remembering the death of our Lord, whose soul was made an offering for sin, as his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed, by the help of the Spirit, to nourish our souls and spirits up unto eternal life; and in prayer, one with and for another. And that this is the absolute order which the Lord hath appointed in his last will and testament, doth evidently appear both by his own precept and command, and by the practice of such as first trusted in him; and if so, then neither infants of days, nor yet such as profess themselves to be believers in Jesus, but refuse as a manifestation thereof, according to the practice

of such as first trusted in Christ, to yield up themselves to be planted into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and so visibly to put on Christ, as did the Christians of old; I say such have no visible right to enter into, or walk in the order of the gospel of Christ; and to conclude the point, the argument stands thus: They, and they only, have visible right to enter into, and walk in the visible order of Christ's house, and so to wait for his coming, whom Christ Jesus, himself being the Lord of the house, hath appointed, and his apostles being his stewards, have approved of. But such as first have been made disciples or scholars of Jesus, and believers in Christ, and afterwards have been baptized or dipped, and thereby visibly and lively planted into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, are they, and they only, whom Christ hath appointed, and the apostles have approved of. See his commission; peruse their practice: *ergo*, They, and they only, have visible right to enter into, and walk in the order of Christ's house, and *so to wait for his coming the second time, in the form of a King, with his glorious kingdom, according to promise.* See for a farther confirmation of the last clause, in the 1st Epistle ω the Corinthians, i. 7: 1 Thes. i. 10: 2 Thes. iii. 5."*

This, probably, is as far as any would go; and it shows how thoroughly he had imbibed Baptist sentiments, and how soon he learned to carry them out to their fullest results.

* Mark: Clark was a premellenialist, as were all orthodox Baptists of that age.—Ed.

Concerning our articles, those signed by John Clark, I have to say that we do not possess such. Whatever was the original platform of the church, it is, most unfortunately, with other valuable papers, we fear irretrievably lost. The truth is, that such was the early condition of the church, it was next to impossible its records could be preserved. Dr. John Clark himself had his own duties as a physician to attend to; the chief burden of the State evidently devolved more upon him than on any one else. The institutions of Rhode Island were principally framed and moulded by him: it is generally supposed he was the author of its original code of laws. In 1651 he was sent to England to attend to the affairs of the Colony, and remained there till 1664; when he returned he had, besides his church and the business of the State, his own affairs to retrieve, which had suffered much while he was engaged for the Commonwealth; and to crown all, there is reason to believe that his executors were unfaithful to their trusts and that his papers under their charge were allowed to be scattered and destroyed. Those too who had the care of the church during the absence of Clark, and after his death, instead of recording every thing regularly in a book, placed the doings of the church on loose papers, so that by the year 1725, it was difficult to collect any of the early acts of the church. Only a page, as it were, here and there has been preserved, causing us to regret what is lost.

Besides a few scraps gathered up from other

sources, we have what Clark himself considered the essence of the Baptist faith, being the propositions he proposed to defend before the ministers and magistrates of Massachusetts, while he was lying in Boston in prison, but which they declined to meet.

You may feel some interest to see them, as they show what were the sentiments insisted upon chiefly by the first pastor of an American Baptist church, and what were the sentiments most deeply wrought into the minds of the earliest American Baptists. These propositions he has illustrated in a most satisfactory manner, showing that he was a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of Heaven; and that he fed the church with the manna of the gospel. The antique, and at times quaint mode of expression, will not derogate from their value.

"The testimony of *John Clark*, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, at *Boston*, in the behalf of my Lord, and of his people, is as followeth:

1. I testify that Jesus of *Nazareth*, whom God hath raised from the dead, is made both *Lord* and Christ. This Jesus I say is the *Christ*, in English, the *Anointed* One, [and] hath a name above every name. He is the *Anointed Priest;* none to, or with him in point of atonement. The *Anointed Prophet;* none to him in point of instruction; the *Anointed King*, who is gone to his Father for his glorious kingdom, and shall ere long return again; and that this Jesus Christ is also *The Lord;* none to or with him by way of commanding and ordering (with respect to the

worship of God) the household of faith, which being purchased with his blood as Priest, instructed, and nourished by his Spirit as Prophet, do wait in his appointment as he is the Lord, in hope of that glorious kingdom which shall ere long appear.

2. I testify that Baptism, or dipping into water, is one of the commandments of this Lord Jesus Christ, and that a visible believer, or disciple of Jesus Christ (that is, one that manifesteth repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus Christ) is the only person that is to be baptized, or dipped with that visible baptism, or dipping of Jesus Christ in water; and also that visible person that is to walk in the visible order of his house; and so to wait for his coming the second time in the form of a *Lord*, and *King*, with his glorious kingdom, according to promise; and for his sending down (in the time of his absence) the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit of Promise; and all this according to the last will and testament of that living Lord, whose will is not to be added to, or taken from.

3. I testify or witness, that every such believer in Christ Jesus, that waiteth for his appearing, may in point of liberty, yea, ought in point of duty, to improve that talent his Lord hath given unto him, and in the congregation may either ask for information to himself, or, if he can, may speak by way of prophecy for the edification, exhortation, and comfort of the whole; and out of the congregation at all times, upon all occasions, and in all places, as far as the jurisdic-

tion of his Lord extends, may, yea ought to walk as a child of light, justifying wisdom with his ways, and reproving folly with the unfruitful works thereof, provided all this be shown out of a good conversation, as James speaks, with meekness of wisdom.

4. I testify that no such believer, or servant of Jesus Christ, hath any liberty, much less authority, from his Lord, to smite his fellow-servant, nor yet with outward force, or arm of flesh, to constrain, or restrain his conscience, nor yet his outward man for conscience' sake, or worship of his God, where injury is not offered to the person, name or estate of others; every man being such as he shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and must give account of himself to God; and therefore ought to be fully persuaded in his own mind, for what he undertakes, because he that doubteth is damned if he eat, and so also if he act, because he doth not eat or act in faith; and what is not of faith, is sin."

These sentiments, the supreme Lordship of Christ; the obligation of all believers to be immersed in his name, none but believers having any right to be baptized; the privilege of believers to improve their talents in or out of the church; and perfect liberty of conscience to every being, were the leading truths on which the early Baptists of this country mostly insisted, and which constituted their joy and strength; and also laid the foundation for that great success we witness at this day. May we never lose sight of these foundation principles of the Bap-

tist cause! But to us it must seem strange that the ministers of Massachusetts were so afraid of these very propositions that they dared not meet a single Baptist, and he in prison, in their defence.

I suppose I have thoroughly wearied you, but I must add the inscription of Clarke's tombstone.

To the Memory of
DOCTOR JOHN CLARKE,
One of the original purchasers and proprietors of
this island, and one of the founders of the
First Baptist Church in Newport,
its first pastor and munificent benefactor:
He was a native of Bedfordshire, England,
and a practitioner of physic in London.
He, with his associates came to this island from Mass.,
in March, 1638, O. S., and on the 24th
of the same month obtained a deed thereof from
the Indians. He shortly after gathered
the church aforesaid and became its pastor.
In 1651, he, with Roger Williams, was sent to England,
by the people of Rhode Island Colony,
to negociate the business of the Colony with the
British ministry: Mr. Clarke was instrumental
in obtaining the Charter of 1663 from Charles II., which
secured to the people of the State free and
full enjoyment of judgment and conscience in matters
of religion. He remained in England
to watch over the interests of the Colony until 1664,
and then returned to Newport and
resumed the pastoral care of his church.
Mr. Clarke and Mr. Williams, two fathers of the Colony,
strenuously and fearlessly maintained that

None but Jesus Christ had authority
over the affairs of conscience. He died
April 20, 1676, in the 66th year
of his age, and is here interred.

Forgive this long epistle, and receive the fraternal regards of yours,

S. ADLAM."

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FOREGOING.

THE reader will admit that what has been submitted are *facts* and *dates*, and not opinions and theories. These must be received until by *facts* and *dates more authentic*, these are set aside. The historical papers containing these has been before the public, and the Providence church for seven years, and a refutation of them solicited, and yet such a refutation has not been attempted. We therefore feel forced to the following conclusions:

I.

That Roger Williams neither founded, nor was pastor of the present first Baptist church in Providence, R. I.

That Roger Williams, after remaining with the society of informally baptized persons he had

collected, about *four months* only, withdrew from it, as not entitled to be considered a Scriptural Church; and it is more than probable that his withdrawal and opposition to the movement, resulted in its immediate dissolution.

II.

Cotton Mather, who lived contemporaneous with Roger Williams, and wrote an Ecclesiastical History of New England, expressly declares that upon Williams' withdrawing from the society he had formed, *i. e.*, upon his turning *Seeker* and *Familist*, THE CHURCH CAME TO NOTHING.

This testimony is important, and certainly will not be questioned by Pedobaptists, to meet whose charges (that American Baptists all sprang from Roger Williams, and their baptisms from his informal baptism) we write this, because Mather was himself the most eminent Pedobaptist, and most violent hater and persecutor of Baptists, of his day. Mather had the means of knowing whether that "thing like a *church*," as he called it, continued or not; and it cannot be assumed that he would have written and published to the world, in almost the next town (Boston) and in the face of the church, that it was dissolved upon Williams' leaving it, if the church was then in existence, to deny the charge! Can the fact be found anywhere, that any member of Williams' society, or any Baptist living in the days of Mather, ever denied this statement? Such a denial never was heard of, that I can learn.

But had Williams' "thing like a *church*" con-

tinued and flourished, and been the parent of other churches, Mather would have seized upon the fact to have prejudiced the world the more against the Baptists, pointing to the invalidity of their baptisms and ordinances, owing to their informal origin, as Pedobaptists now endeavor to do. But this Mather did not do, because he could not; for he affirms that the "thing" soon came to nothing—and long before he wrote this there was no such "thing" in existence. Williams gathered the thing in March, and repudiated and left it in July following. It was only a "thing" of a day. If then, the last remains of the only thing called a Baptist church, with which Williams had any connection or any thing to do, vanished from the earth so soon, having in the days of Mather no successor, the reader must conclude that that Williams' society was not the prolific mother of the Baptist churches of New England, much less of America, for it never had a church child—it was itself an abortion.

III.

Our third conclusion is, that the present first church in Providence was not founded by Roger Williams, nor was he ever the pastor of it a day, or an hour, nor of any Baptist church in existence; since, as has been proved above, the only "*thing*" like a church with which he had any connection, had but an experimental existence, *without having originated another church* or *leaving a successor*.

IV.

We are forced to conclude from the dates

submitted, that the first church in Prov.dence wae first organized in 1652, and did not hold at first the faith now held by Baptists, but was a schism or succession from a regular Baptist church that had existed in Providence some years before it.

V.

We can see how the first church in Providence came to have its present confused history and false dates. It had no records or written history for the first century of its existence; and its present records were compiled principally from *oral* history, inferences, and suppositions. The church from which the present Providence first church came, had died out, and it was supposed that the present church was the legitimate offspring and successor of that church, which is not the fact, for it was a schism: and it was supposed that that perverted church was the successor or offspring of Williams' society—which was not the fact; and knowing well that Williams gathered his society in March, 1639, the compiler of the records of the Providence church dated the origin of the present church with the baptism of Roger Williams—*i. e.*, gave it the date of Williams' society—perhaps, not unwilling for the Providence church to enjoy the *prestige* of being the oldest Baptist church in America, and the *eclat* of so illustrious a founder as Roger Williams.

VI.

It can also be seen from the *dates* submitted, that, without contesting the age of the Providence church, granting her the year 1639

as the year of her birth, and that she is the veritable successor of that "*thing like a church*," which Williams gathered, still she is not the oldest Baptist church in America, by at least one full year.

For the facts and dates submitted show that Dr. John Clark came to Newport in the year 1638, and soon after his arrival organized a Baptist church, and the evidence is satisfactory that, though scattered for a season, while the British held possession of the island, it has never ceased to exist, and that the present first Baptist church in Newport is its successor and representative. That 1638, and not 1644, is the true date of the founding of the Newport church, is established beyond controversy by a fact stated in a note at the bottom of the 455th page of Minutes of the Philadelphia Association, published by the American Publication Society. (*See the note to which we called Mr. Adlam's attention, and his remarks.*) From this note, and it is as authentic as conclusive, that in 1738 the church of Newport was one hundred years old, and it was therefore founded in 1638. That upon that occasion John Callender, its then pastor, preached a sermon upon the occasion. We consider this note of itself as putting a full end to the controversy about the age of the Newport church—as Mather's statement does to the claim that Roger Williams founded the present first church in Providence.

VII.

We conclude that the first Baptist church in Newport is older by one year, even should we

allow the date claimed by the Providence church to be the true date; while if 1652 is its true date, and the Newport church was founded in 1644; when all admit she was in existence, then is the Newport church eight years older than the Providence church.

But if 1652 is the true birth-year of the Providence church, as has been shown, and 1638 the true birth-year of the Newport church, as has been shown—then is the Newport church fourteen years older than her rival.

VIII.

There is a conclusion bearing upon the use Pedobaptists make of the claims of the Providence church, which may be stated here. That but *very few* Baptist churches in America or New England have any ecclesiastical connection with either the church in Newport or Providence. Baptist ministers coming over from England and Wales, as well as from the Continent, raised up churches in different parts of the country, from New England to South Carolina, and these have since multiplied all over the land. It is said truly by an author who has recently examined the period we have been discussing, and he freely conceded the priority claimed by the Newport church:

"They are connected in part with the Baptists of England, whose origin, in their turn, is derived from the Baptists of the European Continent, (reaching back to apostolic days,) and from the Baptists, who from the early ages of the church were nurtured in Wales; and they are

directly connected in part with the Cambro-British Baptists, who have preserved in the mountain fastnesses of their native land, (Wales,) the principles and practices which they received from their fathers, and from their fathers' fathers, from the ancient times of Christianity. Thus the chain which unites them to the early Baptist church, is a chain of triple link, which cannot easily be broken."

IX.

There is a final conclusion due to a man, Dr. John Clark, as well as to the Baptist denomination. One of the wrongs resulting from the false date of the Providence church, is the undue prominence given to Roger Williams as a Baptist, while the life, and prominent labors, and sacrifices of Dr. John Clark and Holmes, are scarcely known.

It is greatly to be regretted that any one was ever so mislead as to proclaim to the world that Roger Williams was the first man to conceive and advocate the idea of religious liberty, and that he was the father and founder of the American Baptist churches. Both of these statements are utterly false. The Baptists of every age have been the sole advocates of religious liberty in its fullest sense.* They advocated it in opposition to Papists and Protestants in England, in the pulpit, by their pens, and by martyrdom.

---

* See Orchard's History of Foreign Baptists, Vol. I. English Baptists, Vol. II. Every Baptist should procure and read these; and every man who wishes a correct knowledge of church history.

Williams confessedly borrowed his views of soul liberty from them. He was indebted tc Baptists, and not the Baptists to him. He has no claim to be acknowledged a Baptist, and better would it be for his memory if his short and abortive religious Baptistical life was obliterated from the pages of history, and the memory of men. For a man, only four months associated with a handful of informally baptized men, and then renouncing his baptism, and all existing church organizations and ordinances as illegal and void, to be lauded and eulogized as the father and founder of American Baptists, is silly and absurd. As a man and statesman, we admire him; as a bold and powerful advocate of civil and religious liberty, and for all he did in conjunction with Clark in framing and securing the Charter of Rhode Island, we do him homage; but as a Baptist we owe him nothing. As a religionist, he had the courage to suffer, but he was uninstructed, unstable, and visionary.

"There is another name," says a writer, who is preparing a history of the life and times of John Clark, and the first century of American Baptists, "long, too long concealed by Williams being placed before him, who will in after times be regarded with unmingled affection and respect, as the true pioneer of the Baptist cause in the New World. That orb of purest lustre will yet shine forth, and Baptists, whether they regard his spotless character, his talents, his learning, the services he rendered, the urbanity and modesty that distinguished him, will mention

John Clark as the real founder of the first church upon the American soil."

Again I say—all honor to Williams as a statesman, and gratitude be his for what, as a *man*, but not as a *Baptist*, he did. He indeed reached forward and grasped the Baptist standard, but his heart faltered, and his hand trembled and fell. That banner was reared and sustained in defiance of prisons and stripes unto blood, by hands in Newport, and its conquests carried into the very heart of Massachusetts, and a work was commenced by John Clark and his suffering coadjutors, which will continue to spread and triumph,

Till the waves of the bay where the Mayflower lay,
Shall foam and freeze no more!

due 12/06/90

GRAVES, James Robinson 943
Trials and sufferings Bap.741
for religious liberty N558f
in New England G776tr
1858